

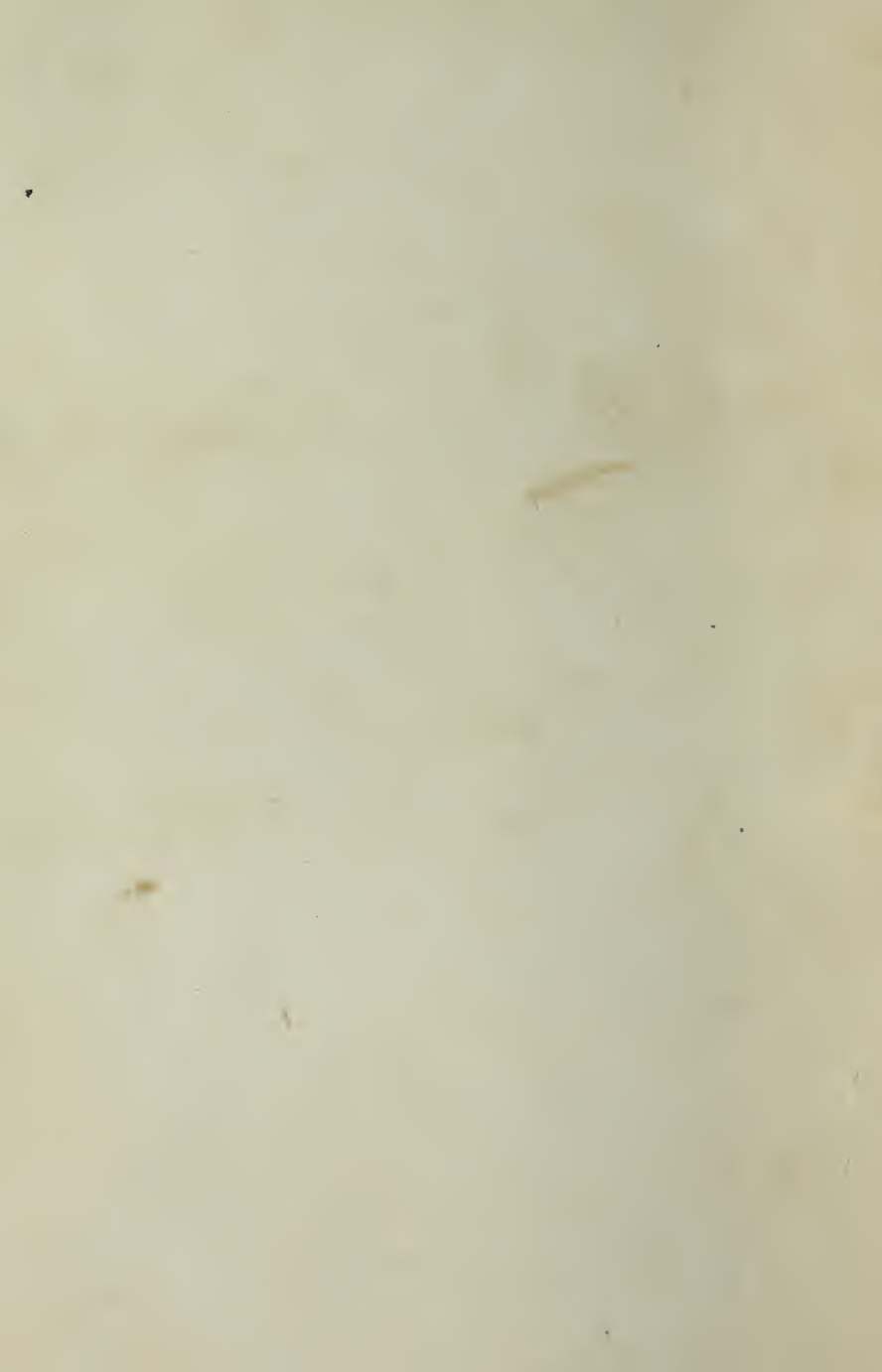




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"Tiny thought there wasn't a Home like it in the whole world."

THE
BEAUTIFUL GATE,

AND

Other Tales.

BY

CAROLINE CHESEBRO',

AUTHOR OF "DREAMLAND," "ISA, A PILGRIMAGE," ETC.

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TO THE CHILDREN

OF

My Brother and my Sister:

Not long ago, in the pleasant summer time, I inscribed this little book to you,—and when I made the offering, it was to me as if I had gathered a bunch of flowers from my heart for you; from the furrowed field of my heart—I will not yet awhile presume to call it a garden. Since then, dreary winter days have fallen upon us, and a great shadow, that will never pass away from your Grandfather's house.

You will not send me from your distant homes any wondering look—you will not be surprised, I know, when I take back the bouquet I gave you, and lay it.—no! I will not say upon A Grave. She who has gone from me—from our household—to “the country far away” is alive forever more, we all know, and we will never, never think of her as dead.

To her dear memory who gave me courage and the heart to labor, I must inscribe this little volume. Do any of you ask me why? She was the joy of my childhood, and the best friend of my later years—the melody and sunlight of my life. And therefore do I dedicate the book written with a thought of you,

TO THE DEAR MEMORY

OF

My Blessed Mother.

The Beautiful Gate.



~ INY the Poet was born in the coun-
try. Thrice blessed are they who
have the beautiful country for their
birth-place. Now I know there is not one among

you but will say the same thing. If there is, from my heart I pity you! Josiah, the wood-cutter, was his father; and just on the border of a forest stood their cottage home.

There was nothing remarkable about this cottage. It was built of wood, like any other little house: it had never been painted, but for all that, it had a good, substantial color of its own—for the sun, and the rain, and the wind had very kindly clubbed together and given it a good, durable color of their own making, without a cent of cost. Under the edges of the old roof, like a ragged sort of fringe, hung long rows of swallows' nests—a queer sort of ornament for a cottage!—and what a chattering those birds did keep up. And the little windows—they were, indeed, a sight to see, such odd little breaks in the wall they looked like—with panes of glass bright as diamonds, made, one might think, for bird's eye views, rather than old Josiah's and Kitty's eyes.

Just under the moss-covered roof was a garret

chamber, in which Tiny slept, with the birds so near him, and the shadow of the great forest overshadowing him. There was nothing remarkable about the cottage, I repeat, but Tiny thought there wasn't a home like it in the whole world, and in fact much the same thought Josiah, who was himself only a Tiny of larger and rougher growth. I wonder if you understand how that could be? Yes! a great house was it in the wood-cutter's eyes. Perhaps you will think because he was an ignorant, stupid old creature, who had always lived in the woods, who had never seen anything of the world, or the grand houses people build. But that is your mistake. Tiny the first, I mean old Josiah, was born in a city, and there he had lived a great many years; and he had seen enough of crowds and palaces to satisfy him. You are thinking now how he could possibly imagine his humble cabin in the country such a wonder! Don't you know it was his HOME—and that his own hands had built it when he was a young man, and

thinking of Kitty for his wife! Now you understand.

On the border of the great forest stood this cottage home. Neither about this forest was there anything remarkable, excepting to the three persons who lived in its great shadow. Nobody in the world knew so well as Josiah how much those mighty oak and maple trees were worth — and when he swung his axe there, he seemed as proud of them as if they were his children, and he seemed to love them, too, nearly as well as he loved his Tiny. They had a way of talking to him that he liked, for he was not a deaf man, nor yet a stupid man, and he understood the talk of the trees as well as any great poet that you ever heard of.

Also to Josiah's wife and Tiny's mother, Kitty, it was a remarkable forest. Would she ever forget the morning when she lost her way there, and the wood-cutter helped her to find it again? She was a young girl then. Josiah was much older than she. I dare say there was more than

one gray hair in his head at that very time—they had loved each other ever since that morning.

But more wonderful, far more wonderful, than either to his father or his mother, was that great dark forest without paths, to the poet Tiny. Not only because innumerable singing birds built their nests, and laid their eggs, and hatched their young, and taught them how to fly there. Not only because multitudes of flowers, gay and beautiful, and like the stars in number, blossomed there—nor yet because a river, with waves blue like the sky, down which floated snow-white swans, ran past the cottage, dancing through the forest.

But because—now be patient—I intend to tell you why it seemed so wonderful to him, but I must begin again at the beginning.

Tiny was born in the cottage that stood in the shadow of the forest, I said.

There he lived, first in the shape of a little infant that lay helpless in its mother's arms, dream-

ing pretty dreams which were like riddles to him and he could not guess their meaning — (indeed I may as well say it, he was all his life finding out their meaning, and perhaps he did not quite satisfy himself on that score till the day of his death.) Then he lived there as a creeper about the cottage floor, when he sat on the door step listening to the birds and understanding all they said, the chatty, merry little singers in their songs, as readily as his father understood the conversations of the oaks and maples.

That time passed away, and he was a baby no longer, but a gentle boy with golden hair that curled like an angel's, so his mother thought! — a happy little boy, whose blue eyes had so much of heaven in them that you never would have thought that they could possibly grow blind. A loving and obedient child, who could not have believed that there was any creature more beautiful on earth than his dear mother when she held him in her arms, and bent her dear face towards him till his soft round cheek pressed close against

her own — when she held him so, kissing him, and telling him old rhymes and tales which she had learned when she herself was but a little child. Well he loved to listen to all these, but there was one story better than all the rest, which she did not tell so often, but which Tiny remembered longer than any other; it was the story of the Harp that hung up on the kitchen wall.

It had hung there ever since the day that Tiny was born — a poor old pilgrim gave it on that very day to Josiah in exchange for a loaf of bread. By that I do not mean that Josiah sold the loaf to the poor old hungry pilgrim. Josiah was too charitable to make a trade with a beggar. But the stranger said this strange thing to Josiah — “I am near to death — I shall sing no more — I am going home. Keep my harp for me until a singer asks you for it, and promises you that he will sing unto the Lord a New Song. Give it to *him*; but be sure before you do so

that he is worthy to sing the song unto the Lord."

So Josiah had taken the harp home with him, and hung it on the wall, as I said, on the day that Tiny was born. And he waited for the coming of the poet who should have that wondrous song to sing. No fairy tale, no tale of kings and palaces, and beautiful princesses, was even half so beautiful as this, to little Tiny, sitting on his mother's knee, while she narrated it.

And after those days, he had lived there as a rosy, laughing fellow, who ran hunting for the flowers, and chasing the squirrels in the forest—who made necklaces of the red wintergreen berries for his mother, while he hovered like a singing butterfly about his father, as Josiah measured the great oak logs into lengths, and chopped away at them from morning until night.

Then, as a thoughtful boy, who sailed his paper boats upon the river, and saw them go, like beautiful thoughts, sailing on and on towards the great ocean where mighty ships of

thought sail to and fro from one world to another. A quiet lad who asked Josiah such strange questions as puzzled the old man to answer—who listened silently while his father told of the merchants' vessels, and the buildings which would be made from those great pieces of timber—of the churches, and the bridges, and the prisons, of ware-houses and docks, pleasure boats and pirate's cutters, and ships engaged in the slave trade, and mighty men-of-war. How silently Tiny listened while his father told of these things! And while he listened, silently he thought, and thought, and thought.

Then he grew into another sort of fellow. Still more quiet, still more earnest, brave and thoughtful, who had his own secret thoughts about the old Pilgrim and the Harp that hung upon the kitchen wall. He did his work in those days in silence. His work I said—for there was no room in that little cottage for a pair of idle hands. But he did not only work with his hands. Back and forward like a weav

er's shuttle, as somebody said, his thoughts went flying through his brain. And precious stuff was woven there. How his blue eyes used to flash when he read or heard of any iniquity done in the earth! How strong he felt his hand to be to fight for the weak and poor! how eager his tongue was to help them! what gentle words his voice had for any one in trouble! how full his heart was of generous, warm feeling for all in anguish or distress! how often and how earnestly he prayed to God that he would give him something to do in behalf of the poor?

In those days Tiny used to send forth, from time to time, upon the river—that very river which ran past the cottage through the forest, and on towards the sea—a richer treasure than the fragile paper boats with which he used to sport; and what do you think that could be?—Even his songs! Thoughts which came to him sometimes in the dead of night, when he was lying wide awake upon his bed, looking through his little window at the stars, with the swallows

so near him in their nests under the eaves, that Tiny called them his bed-fellows, who slept in feathers as well as himself!

And sometimes they came to him when he sat in the evenings reading aloud to his mother, pausing now and then to look at her through his fingers, and to wonder, when he did so, if ever any other boy had such a mother, so good, and kind, and patient, and so exceeding lovely! I wonder what *you* will say to that? And then again they came to him at times when he silently walked in the silent forest, lost in meditation, gathering no more wintergreen or thorn-berries for his mother's necklaces, to be sure, but thinking of another sort of wreath, of evergreen, which he would some day lay upon her forehead for a crown, because she was HIS MOTHER!

As a helpless infant, happy boy, and thoughtful youth, he had lived in that humble cottage, singing his songs, beholding the glory of the heaven and the earth, and seeing in a vision all his future days.

It is an easy thing for me to tell how dear the old people were to the heart of Tiny, but what a treasure Tiny was to them, oh, that is quite beyond my power. I can only make a guess in the dark at that. They called him their life sometimes, when they were talking of him to each other, and by that they meant, I suppose, that he was what gave the chief value to their life — that he was better than all other things to them.

Every day old Josiah gave thanks to God for Tiny, and while he felt his own strength failing, year by year, while he knew that his right arm was getting weaker, as well as his eyes and his love of life, he looked to the lad, and the blood warmed in his old veins, and in his arm, and in his eyes also; and he grew stronger at the sight of so much beauty, and strength, and promise. And day by day Tiny's mother repeated his sayings, and treasured them in her heart, as words of wisdom; and when she slept she dreamed of him. He was never for one moment absent

from her thoughts. If ever she dropped her work and took to building castles in the air, it was for him that she built them. He was to be the lord and master of them all. And now when she went working busy as a bee about her little house, instead of singing the old songs with which she had hushed him to sleep, so many times, she sang others, new and strange ones—songs which Tiny also sung; he had learned them in the forest he said—in that wonderful forest in whose shadow the little cottage stood.

II.

But, while things went on with them in this smooth way, there was a change at hand. Away down the river, in the world, people had caught an echo of the young voice that was singing with the birds in the forest, and with sweet persuasive words they called to him; they said, “Oh, beautiful singer, come nearer; WE NEED

THEE; come and dwell with us—dwell with us—work with us.”

Tiny heard that call. His heart was in his mouth when he heard it. Wider than ever before opened his handsome eyes—in his heart he was eager to go;—but he said not a word. Yet often he bent his head and lost himself in thought, and his father and mother understood that as well as if he had said outright, “I must leave you.” Neither of them had the strength to say to the other, “It is he that will take the Harp down from our wall and go away”—but both believed it. His mother, when she saw it, threw her arms around his neck and wept, but neither she nor Tiny said a word. He did not tell her his hope; she did not tell him her fear. And presently she dressed her pale face in a smile again—but it was not a natural smile, and Tiny knew it was put on to comfort him. And yet he tried not to know it. He tried to believe that it was the old smile she used to wear before these strange new things had come to pass. He tried to think

she was as happy now as before she knew that the world was calling to her to give her son away!

But though he did his best in trying to believe all this, it was a different affair when Tiny came to old Josiah. For instead of smiling over his suspicion, the father only looked more serious than ever, and tears and grave looks went about with him wherever he went; they were the shadow which his sad heart cast. Once, Tiny overheard him in the forest saying to himself, "The world!" With great scorn he said it, as if, from the depths of his honest old heart, he despised it. "The world! it is as hollow as a hollow tree," and with that he struck his axe against just such a tree, a tree that had no heart in it. You might have thought he owed it a grudge, from the way he did it.

As Josiah spoke Tiny appeared before him. "Father," said he, "do you remember what fine things you used to tell me of the cities built of forests such as this?" Tiny thought that this

was a good opening to the subject: and he looked at Josiah, his father, as if he intended to take him at once into his confidence.

"The cities are well enough," muttered the old man, looking rather displeased, for he knew that Tiny had overheard him talking alone by himself—"I never said anything against them."

"But you said just now that the world is like a hollow tree," continued Tiny.

"The world means the people in it," said Josiah, and that was all he said. He did not intend to hear anything more either, for taking up his axe he began to work in such a way as prevented his hearing or speaking further at that time. And so Tiny walked away, as he knew that his father desired to have him.

Not a word had Tiny spoken of all the new thoughts that went rushing through his mind, keeping him wakeful in the night, and making him so unlike himself by day.

In the garden he worked harder than ever before—but when in the autumn he planted the

seed which should appear in the spring time, he said nothing to his mother about it. To have seen how they avoided the subject, they who had always talked together so much and so freely of all their plans from spring to fall and from fall to spring, to have seen how they avoided speaking now of another summer time, one would have thought that their winter was going to last forever.

He arose with the sun — and it was not often that he stopped labor while the day lasted ; but his heart was no longer in that sort of work — he labored like one who is setting his affairs in order before making a long journey. And the father and mother understood it, and when they were alone together, they looked at each other as much as to say, “We know all about it; nobody can enlighten us — we shall lose our Tiny.”

III.

It was in the middle of December that the first snow fell that winter. On that day Tiny sat in the kitchen with his mother, in a very strange mood, poor Kitty thought; but it was not so very strange. Tiny was only silent because he had so much to say, and did not know exactly how to begin his speech. But when she saw his eyes fixed upon the kitchen wall, and on the Harp that hung there, then she began to tremble and to be afraid that very soon she should understand it all too clearly. Still she said nothing—and even when he pushed back his chair from the fire-place and with one arm round her neck said softly in her ear — “Mother,” even then she said nothing, for her terror increased, and tears blinded her eyes, and choked her voice. She did not even take him into her arms and fold him to her breast, and try to tell him how his conduct troubled her.

And perhaps Tiny took her silence for some-

thing more than it really meant—perhaps he took his own hope for the assurance that it was all as he desired; that she understood him and was glad. At all events he walked straight across the kitchen without another word, and took down the old harp from the smoke-browned wall, and seating himself in the place by the fireside where he always sat in the evenings, he began to tune the harp, and then to sing!

Nothing said the mother all this while — only she wept in silence; and not a word said Tiny, but his hope shone from his eyes as he touched the harp and sang.

Presently the poor mother's hands dropped from the face they had hidden, but Tiny dared not look at her; he feared to see what might be looking at him from that face. Like one gone out of her mind she gazed at him; then at length she stood up and continued gazing at her boy, as if in a splendid dream. She had done with such tears as she had just now shed—the old smile, only brighter than ever, crossed her face like

sunshine. And then her heart overflowed. It ran over her face like a flood of tears, but they were tears in which was no bitterness; she made no attempt to hide them. So freely did they fall that she knew nothing of them — they were as bright as her smile. For she thought upon the Pilgrim's words, and the New Song that should be sung unto the Lord. Oh, if indeed her Tiny was to sing it! And she went up to Tiny, her son, and tenderly she laid her hard, rough hands upon his golden locks, so tenderly as never other than a mother's hand could rest upon the head of her child, and she blessed him, calling him a Poet, a true singer, and said, verily the Harp was his, and that for him the Pilgrim left it!

Never had these words, or words like these, fallen from her lips before. He had waited a long time to hear her say them. The world, yes, the world had called him a singer and a poet, but in his heart he had said when his father and his mother called him so, then he should know

that it was true—then he would believe it—then he would go forth and do his work.

Therefore when Tiny now heard her dear voice saying these things to him, the sound was more than he could bear: he threw aside his harp, and hiding his face in the folds of her woollen dress, wept aloud. “Now I have your blessing,” said he, “I may go! But when I come back again I will sing a splendid song, not like any that you ever heard before, and then you will call me ten times a poet and a singer. I shall come back, mother—this only is my home. And I can never find one where you are not.”

And there was such a grand light in the two eyes that looked upon her, such a wondrous music in the voice of Tiny as he spoke, he seemed so changed, so glorified, that the poor old mother of the boy stood back in her astonishment, and looked at him, and could not say a word. Nothing could she say—but well he knew that if she could speak she would bid him ‘Go!’—he read it in her eyes.

But even as he read this word there—the word of all others he had most longed to hear—sad and tender thoughts, instead of glad and proud ones, overwhelmed him. And taking up the harp again he sang the story of his childhood. And running through it all, as the bright silver chain which kept all these pearls of memory securely in their places, and gave to them their worth, was his dear mother's name. How she wept to hear him! All her kindness, all her gentleness and patience, and the great love that never was found wanting; her care over his helplessness, her long watching over him, all her deeds, every one of them, had their memory in his inmost heart.

The afternoon passed away, but neither Tiny nor his mother noticed that the night was coming on, until it became quite dark in the kitchen, and then Josiah came home.

When he opened the door his son seemed not to know it. Kitty hurried up to him with her finger on her lip, as much as to say that he was

not to speak a word, but only listen to their poet. There was no need of giving him this caution however, for poor Josiah could not have spoken a syllable though the need had been ever so great. And when he looked at his wife and saw how she was smiling, and from her to their Tiny with the Harp in his hand, his wonder increased more and more. He thought that Kitty must have lost her senses. How could she smile at this?

And though Tiny played, and played his best, and sang his wonderfulest, nothing said the old man—but his grave face became still graver, and he looked as if in sore distress, or else in sore displeasure.

So at length Tiny laid aside the Harp, and crossed the hearth to the corner in the shadow where his father sat, and he said softly, as if afraid of the sound of his own voice, or else as if awed by what the gray hairs and wrinkled visage of his father said to him,

“I have not forgotten what the old pilgrim

told you. When I tuned the harp I remembered what must follow. But, father, may I not sing unto the Lord the New Song? May I not?"

The old man returned never a word.

"If I go away from you I shall come back again. I only want to go a little while, that I may comfort the sad, and help the weary, and assist the poor. As truly as I live, father, that is all my desire."

Not a word said Josiah. If he could have wept a little then, it would have done him good—but not a tear fell from his eyes; and from his face the look of pain and sorrow did not pass away. It was a look that pierced poor Tiny to the heart—but still he thought, "I should be but a poor soldier if I were willing to give up the fight so soon. My father would not expect it of me—he would not wish it." So Tiny took up the harp again without another word, and all that evening while the storm raved against the cottage walls, and tossed the falling snow into great drifts and hills, he played the most beauti-

ful music, and patiently waited for his father to say some encouraging, or at least some cheerful word.

But nothing of the kind, and not a word of any kind said the old man; and yet, while he sat in the dark corner with his hand shading his eyes, as if the tallow candle light were too much for him, Josiah felt in his heart pretty certain of the end that was to be.

I V .

In the morning, by break of day, Josiah waked. His wife was awake long before him—indeed she had scarcely closed her eyes that night; and she was ready to speak the moment his eyes opened. For she had promised Tiny that she would have a private talk with his father. So she said in a low, but distinct voice, as though she were talking to herself:

“I have nursed him, and watched over him

year after year. He has been like the sun shining in my path, and precious as a flower. There is not another like him. I love him better than I do my eyes. If he were away I might as well be blind."

"That puts me in mind of what I've been dreaming," said the old man. "If I was only sure that he would come at last to the Beautiful Gate, I would n't say another word. But who can tell? And if it actually happened that he lost his sight — poor Tiny!"

Josiah did not finish what he had begun to say, but hid his face in the bed clothes, and then the good wife knew that he was weeping, and her own tears began to fall, and she could not say a word.

After breakfast, when Josiah had gone off into the woods, the mother told Tiny of this bit of a conversation — but of course she could not explain about the dream; she knew no more what the boy's father had dreamed than you or

I do; only she knew it was something curious and fanciful, about the BEAUTIFUL GATE.

Tiny listened with great interest to his mother's words, and he smiled as he kissed her when she had done speaking, and he said, "Wait till this evening, mother dear, and you shall see."

And so she waited till the evening.

When they were gathered around the kitchen fire at night, Tiny took down his harp again. The father, when he saw what it was the boy would do, made a little move as if he would prevent him; but the mother playfully caught the old man's hand and held it in hers while she said aloud, "Only one song, Tiny. Your father was broke of his rest last night — so get through with it as quick as you can."

At which remark the old man looked well pleased, for now he fancied that his wife agreed with him in this business, and that together they should soon put all nonsensical dreaming about the world out of the boy's head. For Josiah would not yet allow himself to believe that it

was for his boy Tiny that the old pilgrim left the harp.

And yet never was a sweeter voice than that of the young singer — old Josiah acknowledged that to himself — and old Josiah knew — he was a judge of such things, for all his life he had been singing songs in his heart.

Yes! though you would never have imagined such a thing, that is, if you are in the habit of judging folks from their outward appearance — he had such a rough, wrinkled face, brown with freckles and tan; such coarse, shaggy gray hair — and such a short, crooked, awkward figure; you never would have guessed what songs he was forever singing in his heart with his inward voice — they were songs which worldly people would never hear — only God and the angels heard them. Only God and the holy angels! — for as to Kitty, though she was Josiah's best earthly friend, though she knew he was such an excellent man, though she believed that there was not a better man than he in all the world,

though year by year he had been growing lovelier and lovelier in her eyes—yes! though his hair of course got rougher and grayer, and his figure more bent, and his hands harder, and his teeth were nearly all gone!—growing lovelier because of his excellence, which increased with age as good wine does—still even she, who knew him better than any person on earth, even she knew him so little that she never so much as dreamed that this wonderful voice of Tiny's was but the echo of what had been going on in Josiah's heart and mind ever since he was himself a child!

It was because he understood all this so very well that Josiah was troubled when he thought about his son.

But to go back to the singer in the chimney corner. Tiny sat alone on his side of the fire-place, in the little chair fashioned out of knotted twigs of oak which his father had made for him long ago. Opposite him were the old folks—the father with his arms folded on his broad chest—the mother knitting beside him, now and

then casting a side-long glance at the old man to see how it went with him.

Wonderful was that song which Tiny sung!

Even the winter wind seemed hushing its voice to hear it, and through the little windows looked the astonished moon.

And Josiah lifted up his eyes in great amazement, as he heard it — as if he had altogether lost himself. It was nothing like his dream that Tiny sang, though to be sure it was all about a Beautiful Gate.

Altogether about the Beautiful Gate! and of the young poet, who, passing through it, went his way into the great Temple of the World, singing his great songs, borne like a conqueror with a golden canopy carried over him, and a golden crown upon his head! Riding upon a white horse splendidly caparisoned, and crowds of people strewing multitudes of flowers before him! And of the lady who had placed the victor's crown upon his head! She was by his side, more beautiful than any dream, rejoicing in his

triumph, and leading him on towards her father's palace, the Beautiful Pearl Gates of which were thrown wide open, and the king himself with a bare head stood there, on foot, to welcome the Poet in to the great feast.

With this the song ended, and with a grand sweep of the silver strings Tiny gently arose, and hung the harp against the wall, and sat down again with folded hands, and blushing cheek, half frightened, now when all was over, to think what he had done. The fire had vanished from his eyes, and the red glow of his cheek went following after, and if you had gone into Josiah's kitchen just then, you never would have guessed that *he* was the enchanter who had been raising such a storm of splendid music.

At first the old man could not speak — tears choked his words. “Ahem,” said he once or twice, and he cleared his voice with the intention of speaking; but for a long time no words followed. At length he said, shaking his head, — “It is n't like what I dreamed — it is n't like

what I dreamed ;” and one would have supposed that the old man felt himself guilty of a sin by the way he looked at Tiny, it was with so very sad a look.

“ But beautifuler,” said the mother, “ beautifuler, is n’t it, Josiah ! ”

“ Yes,” answered Josiah ; “ but still he spoke as if he had some secret misgiving—as if he were not quite sure that the beauty of the song had a right to do away with the sadness of his dream.

“ But,” said Tiny, timidly, yet as if determined that he would have the matter quite settled now and forever — “ *am* I a singer, father ? *am* I a poet ? ”

Slowly came the answer—but it actually came, “ YES,” with a broken voice and troubled look, and then the old man buried his face in his hands, as if he had pronounced some dreadful doom upon his only son.

Then said Tiny boldly, rising from his seat, “ I must go into the world. It says it needs me

—and father, shall *your* son hide himself when any one in need calls to him for help? I never would have gone, father, if you and mother had not said that I was a singer and a poet. For you I know would never deceive me; and I made a vow that if ever a time came when you should say it to me, that I would go. But this is my HOME, father and mother; I shall never get another. The wide world could not give me one. It is not rich enough to build me a home like this.”

“Do n’t speak in that way,” said the old man, and he turned away that Tiny should not see his face, and he bent his head upon the back of his chair.

Presently Tiny went softly up to him and laid his hand upon Josiah’s arm, and his voice trembled while he said, “Dear father, are you angry with me?”

“No, Tiny,” said Josiah — “but what are you going to do with the world? You! . . . my poor boy.”

“Good!” said Tiny with a loud, courageous voice — as if he were prepared, single handed, to fight all the evil there was in the world — “Good, father, or I would not have dared to take the pilgrim’s harp down from the wall. I will sing,” continued he still more hopefully, and looking up smiling into the old man’s face — “I will sing for the sick and the weary, and cheer them; I will tell the people that God smiles on patient labor, and has a reward in store for the faithful better than gold and rubies. I will get money for my songs, and feed the hungry; I will comfort the afflicted; I will ——”

“But,” said Josiah solemnly, lifting his head from the back of the chair, and looking at Tiny as if he would read every thought there was in the boy’s heart. “What did all that mean about the BEAUTIFUL GATE? Ah, my son, you were thinking more of your own pride and glory, than of the miserable and the poor!”

“It was only to prove to you that I had a voice, and that I could sing, father,” answered Tiny.

Long gazed Josiah upon the face of his son as he heard this. Then he closed his eyes, and bent his head, and Tiny knew that he was praying: that was a solemn silence—you could have heard a pin drop on the kitchen floor.

Presently the old man arose, and without speaking, went softly and took the Harp down from the wall. “Take it,” said he, handing it to Tiny, “Take it—it is your’s. Do what you will. The Lord direct your goings.”

“Without your blessing, father?” said Tiny stepping back and folding his arms upon his breast. He would not take the harp. Then with both hands pressed on Tiny’s head the old man said, “May God bless you, my son.”

The old man’s face was very calm then, and there was not a tear in his eyes as he spoke; he had begun to hope again. And he turned away from Tiny to comfort his poor wife.

“Many, many years we lived alone before our Tiny came,” said he — “and we were very happy — and we will be very happy yet, though he is

going away. He is our all — but if the world needs him he shall go and serve it.” And nothing more said Josiah — for his heart was full — too full for further speech.

V.

Well, — Tiny the singer went sailing down the river one bright morning, on a boat loaded with lumber; his Harp was on his arm, and the rest of his worldly goods upon his back.

It was a sad parting — but they all comforted themselves thinking of the time when he would come back again. It was a long journey to be sure — but then, at the end of it was the world — *which had need of him!*

So Tiny sat upon the top of the lumber, the most valuable part of the ship’s load by far, though the seamen and the owner of the lumber thought him only a silly country lad, who was going down to the city, probably on a fool’s er-

rand. And Tiny looked at the banks of the river, right and left, as they floated down it, and thought of all the songs he would sing.

And all the first day it was of the poor he would help — of the desolate hearts he would cheer — of the weary lives he would encourage, that he thought; the world that had need of him should never find him hard of hearing when it called to him for help. And much he wondered — the poet Tiny sailing down the river towards the world, how it happened that The World with all its mighty riches, and its hosts on hosts of helpers, should ever stand in need of him! But though he wondered, his joy was none the less that it had happened so. And on the first night he dreamed of pale faces growing rosy, and sad hearts becoming lighter — and weary hands strengthened, all by his own efforts. The world that had need of him felt itself better off on account of his labors!

But on the second day of Tiny's journey other thoughts began to mingle in with these. About

his father and mother he thought, not in such a way as they would have been glad to know—but proudly and loftily! What could he do for them? Bring home a name that the world never mentioned except with praises and a blessing! And that thought made his cheek glow and his eyes flash, and at night he dreamed of a trumpeter shouting his name abroad, and going up the river to tell old Josiah how famous his boy had become in the earth!

And the third day he dreamed, with his eyes wide open, the livelong day, of the BEAUTIFUL GATE, and the palace of Fame and Wealth to which it led! and he saw himself entering therein, and the multitude following him. He sat upon a throne, and wise men came with gifts, and offered them to him. Alas, poor Tiny! the world had already too many helpers thinking just such thoughts—it had need of no more coming with such offerings as these—would no one tell him so? Would no one tell him that

the New Song to be sung unto our Lord, was very different from this?

And at the end of the third day, Tiny's journey was ended. . . . And he was landed on the world. . . . Slowly the ship came sailing into harbor, and took its place among a thousand other ships, and Tiny went ashore.

VI.

It was about sunset that Tiny found himself in the street of the great city. The workmen were going home from their labor he thought, at first, — but could it be a city full of workmen, he asked himself as the crowd passed by him and he stood gazing on the poor? For he saw only the poor: now and then something dazzling and splendid went past, but if he turned again to discover what it was, that made his eyes ache so with the brightness, the strange sight was lost in the crowd, and all he could see were pale faces,

and hungry voices, and the half-clad forms of men, and women, and children. And then he said to himself with a groan, "The city is full of beggars."

As he said that, another thought occurred to Tiny, and he unfastened his harp, and touched the strings. But in the din and roar of the city wagons, and in the confusion of voices, for every one seemed to be talking at the top of his voice, what chance had that harp-player of being heard? Still, though the crowd brushed past him as if there was no sound whatever in the harp strings, and no power at all in the hand that struck them, Tiny kept on playing, and presently he began to sing.

It was *that* they wanted — the living, human voice, that trembled and grew strong again, that was sorrowful and joyous, that prayed and wept, and gave thanks, just as the human heart does! It was *that* the people wanted; and so well did they know their want that the moment Tiny began to sing, the crowd going past him heard his

voice. And the people gathered round him, and more than one said to himself with joy, "Our brother has come at last!"

They gathered around him — the poor, and lame, and sick, and blind; ragged children, weary men, desponding women, whose want and sorrow spoke from every look, and word, and dress. Closely they crowded around him; and angry voices were hushed, and troubled hearts for the moment forgot their trouble, and the weary forgot that another day of toil was before them. The pale woman nearest Tiny who held the little baby in her arms, felt its limbs growing colder and colder, and once she looked under her shawl and quickly laid her hand upon her darling's heart, but though she knew then that the child was dead, still she stood there smiling, and looking up towards heaven where Tiny's eyes so often looked, because at that very moment he was singing of the FATHER in Heaven, whose house of many mansions is large enough for all the world.

It was strange to see the effect of Tiny's song upon those people! How bright their faces grew! kind words from a human heart are such an excellent medicine—they make such astonishing cures! You would have thought, had you been passing by the crowd that gathered around Tiny, you would have thought an angel had been promising some good thing to them. Whereas it was only this young Tiny, this country lad, who had journeyed from the shadow of the Great Forest, who was telling them of a good time surely coming!

When he had finished his song, Tiny would have put up his harp, and gone his way, but that he could not do — because of the crowd.

“Sing again!” the people cried. The beggars and rich men together — (it was a long time since they had spoken with one voice.) Did I tell you that a number of rich men had gathered, like a sort of outer wall, around the crowd of poor people which stood next to Tiny.

“Sing again” they cried — and loud and clear

above the other voices said one, "There is but a solitary singer in the world that sings in such a strain as that. And he, I thought, was far away—I mean the poet Tiny. Can this be he?"

Then Tiny's heart leaped within him, hearing it, and he said to himself: "If my father and mother were but here to see it!" And he sung again—and still for the poor, and the weary, and the sick, and the faint-hearted, until the street became as silent as a church where the minister is saying, "Glory be unto the Father." And indeed it was just then a sacred temple, where a sacred voice was preaching in a most sacred cause.

I'm sure you know by this time what the "cause" was? And while he sang, the rich men of the outer circle were busy among themselves, even while they listened, and presently the person who had before spoken, made his way through the crowd, carrying a great purse filled with silver, and he said, "You are Tiny himself—do with this what you think best. We have

a long time been looking for you in the world. Come home with me — and dwell in my house, oh, Poet, I pray you.”

Tiny took the heavy purse, and looked at it, and from it to the people.

Then said he — oh, what melody was in his voice, how sweet his words! “None of you but are my friends — you are more — my brothers and sisters. Come and tell me how much you need.” As he spoke he looked at the woman who stood nearest him with the dead baby in her arms. Her eyes met his, and she threw back the old, ragged shawl, and showed him her little child. “Give me,” said she, “only enough to bury it. I want nothing for myself. I had nothing but my baby to care for.”

The poet bowed his head over the little one, and fast his tears fell on the poor, pale face — and like pearls the tears shone on the soft, white cheek, while he whispered in the ear of the woman, “Their angels do always behold the face of Our Father.” And he gave her what she

needed, and gently covered the baby's face again with the tattered shawl, and the mother went away.

Then a child came up and said — now this was a poor street beggar, remember, a boy whom people called *as bold as a thief* — he came and looked at Tiny, and said gently, as if speaking to an elder brother whom he loved and trusted — “My father and mother are dead — I have a little brother and sister at home, — and they depend on me — I have been trying to get work — but no one believes my story. I would like to take a loaf of bread home to them.”

And Tiny looking at the boy seemed to read his heart, and he said, laying his hand on the poor fellow's shoulder, “Be always as patient, and gentle, and believing as you are now, and you will have bread for them and to spare, without fear.”

Then came an old, old man bending on his staff, and he spoke out sharply, as if he were half starved, and all he said was “Bread!” and

with that he held out his hand as if all he had to do was to ask, in order to get what he wanted.

For a moment Tiny made him no answer, and some persons who had heard the demand, and saw that Tiny gave him nothing, began to laugh. But at that sound Tiny rebuked them with his look, and put his hand into the purse. The old man saw all this, and he said, "I am tired of begging—I'm tired of saying, 'for mercy's sake give to me'—for people do n't have mercy—they know nothing about being merciful, and they do n't care for mercy's sake. I do n't beg of you, Mr. Poet. I only ask you as if you were my son, and that's all. Give me bread. I'm starving."

And Tiny said, "For my dear father's sake take this—God forbid that *I* should ever be deaf when an old man with a wrinkled face and white hair speaks to me."

Afar off stood a young girl looking at the poet. Tiny saw her, and that she needed something of him, though she did not come and ask, and so

he beckoned to her. She came at that, and as she drew nearer he fancied that she had been weeping, and that her grief had kept her back. She had wept so violently that when Tiny spoke to her and said, "What is it?" she could not answer him. But at length while he waited so patiently, she made a great effort, and controlled herself and said — "My mother."

That was all she said — and Tiny asked no more. He knew that some great grief had fallen on her — that was all he needed to know; he laid his hand in hers, and turned away before she could thank him, but he left with her a word that he had spoken which had power to comfort her long after the money he gave her was all gone — long after the day when her poor mother had no more need for bread. "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will lift me up." That was what he whispered to her as he left her.

And thus he went through that crowd of miserable people, comforting them all. But it was

remarkable how much more value the poor folks seemed to put upon his word than they did upon the money he gave them, much as they stood in need of that! I wonder if you ever thought about the wonderful power there is in words?

At length, when the purse was empty, he stood alone in the midst of the circle of rich men who had given him the silver to distribute as he would. Then the man who handed him the purse went up and said to Tiny, "Poet, come home with me. You are come at last! the city ought to be illuminated — we have stood so long in need of you, expecting you."

So Tiny, believing what the rich man said, went home with the stranger — and for a long time he abode in that house.



VII.

And rich men feasted Tiny, and taught him to drink wine: and great men praised him, and

taught him so that he believed their praise was precious above all things, and that he could not live without it! Was not that absurd? Nay, children, was not that most terrible, that our dear Tiny should ever have been tempted to believe such wicked trash and falsehood? He, too, who was to sing that sweet and holy New Song to the Lord!

They surrounded him day and night, these rich, gay men, and these great men, and they fed upon the delicious thoughts he gave them, and they kept him in such a whirl of pleasure that he had no time for working for the poor, and hardly any time for thinking of them. Excepting at the dead of night, when he sometimes fancied or dreamed that the old pilgrim owner of the harp had come, or would come quickly, and take it away from him. At these times poor Tiny would make excellent resolutions, but the next day was sure to see them broken. He seemed no stronger when he attempted to keep them than a poor little bird who is determined

that he will be free, and so goes driving against the wires of his cage!

When Tiny spoke with his friend, as he sometimes did, about the plan with which he had come into the world, his friend always made him very polite answers, and good promises — oh yes, certainly, he would do all that *he* could to help him on in such an excellent cause! But the fact was, he did everything to prevent him. I wonder if any body else has got any such friend in his heart, or in his house, as our Tiny found in his very first walk through that city street? If I knew of any one that had, I should say, look out for him! Beware of him.

And so Tiny lived, and presently it happened just as you would expect; his conscience troubled him no longer; he only sang such songs on feast days, and holidays, and even in the church, as his companions liked to have him; and he became very well pleased with his employment! That was the very worst of it.

I shall tell you in a very few words what hap-

pened next. Tiny suddenly fell ill of a very curious disease, which caused all his rich friends to forsake him, and he almost died of it.

In those days his only helper was a poor young beggar girl — one of those persons whom he had relieved by his songs, and by the money he distributed from the rich man's purse that happy day. The little girl who had wept so bitterly, and whose only word was, when he questioned her,—“my mother.”

He recovered from his disease in time, but all his old acquaintances had forsaken him ; and he must have felt their loss exceedingly, for now he had an attack of a desperate complaint, which I pray you may never have! — called Despair — and Tiny crept away from the sight of all men, into a garret, and thought that he would die there.

A garret at Home is a very different place from a garret in the World,—and so our poet thought, when he compared this miserable, dismal place with the little attic far, far away

in his own father's cottage, where he was next door neighbor to the swallows who slept in their little mud cabins under the cottage eaves!

Never in his life was Tiny so lonely. He had come to help the World, said he, talking to himself, and the World cared not half so much about it as it would about the doings of a wonderful "learned pig," or the extraordinary spectacle of a man cutting profiles with his toes in black paper!

"Have you been all the while helping the world, and is this all the pay you get?" said the girl, his poor friend, who remembered what he had done for her, when she was in her worst need.

"Yes," said Tiny; but there was no truth in what he said. He did not intend to speak falsely, however,—which proves the sad pass he had arrived at; he did not even know when he was deceiving himself! And when Tiny said that "yes," what do you suppose he thought of? Not of all the precious time that he had wasted—

not of the Pilgrim's Harp—not of the promises he had made his father—nor of the great hope of the poor which he had so cruelly disappointed—but only of the evil fortune which had fallen on himself! This beggar girl to wait on him, instead of the most beautiful lady in the world for a crown bearer! This garret for a home, instead of a place at the king's table! And more fiercely than ever raged that sickness called Despair.

But at length his strength began to return to him a little, and then for the first time poor Tiny discovered that he was Blind. And all the days and weeks that came and went were like one long, dark night. In those dreadful days our Singer had nothing to do but to think, and the little beggar girl had nothing to do but to beg—for Tiny's charity and goodness of heart seemed to have all forsaken him, and one day in his anger he drove her out of his garret, and bade her return no more, for that the very thought of her was hateful to him. In doing this, Tiny brought

a terrible calamity upon himself; he fell against his Harp and broke it.

After that, while he sat pondering on the sad plight he was in, hungry, and cold, and blind, he suddenly started up. A new thought had come to him. "I will go home to my father's house," he said. "There is no other way for me. Oh, my mother!"—and bitterly he wept as he pronounced that name, and thought how little like her tender and serene love was the love of the best of all the friends he had found in that great City of the World.

As he started up so quickly, in a sort of frenzy, his foot struck against the broken harp, and instantly the instrument gave forth a wailing sound, that pierced the poet's heart. He lifted up the harp: alas! it was so broken he could do nothing with it; from his hands it fell back upon the floor where it had lain neglected, forgotten, so long. But Tiny's heart was now fairly awakened, and stooping to the floor, he raised the precious treasure again. "I will carry back the

broken fragments," said he ; " they shall go back to my father with me. The harp is his — I can do nothing more with it forever. I have ruined it—I have done nothing for the world, as I promised him. A fine thing it is for me to go back to him in this dreadful plight. But if he says to me, 'Thou art no son of mine,' I will say, 'Father, I am no more *worthy* to be called thy son ; make me thy hired servant — only pay me in love.' "

VIII.

And so saying, Tiny began to descend from his attic. Carefully he went down the stairs, ready to ask help of the first person whose voice he should hear. But he had groped his way as far as the street door, before he met a soul. As he stepped upon the threshold, and was about to move on into the street, a voice — a child's voice — said to him,

" I'm very hungry, sir."

The patient tone of the speaker arrested Tiny's steps, and he pondered it a moment. It was the hearts that belonged to voices like this, which he had vowed to help! His own heart sunk within him at that thought. "Wretched soul that I am," said he to himself, thinking of the opportunities which he had lost. But to the child he said,

"I'm blinder than a bat, and hungry, too. So I'm worse off than you are. Do you live about here?"

"Just around the corner," said the little girl.

"Is there a physician near here?" he asked next; for a new thought—a new hope, rather—had come into his heart.

"Yes, sir—just very near. I know where it is," said the child. "I got him once for my mother."

"If you will lead me to him," said Tiny, his voice broken as his heart was, "I will do a good turn for you. You won't be the loser by it. Who takes care of you?"

"Of me, sir?" asked the girl, as if surprised that he should think that any one took care of her. "Nobody. I'm all alone."

"Alone! alone!" repeated Tiny: "your hand is very little — you are a mite of a girl to be alone."

"They're all dead but me, every one of 'em. Yes, sir, they are."

"No mother?" said Tiny, with a choking voice — thinking of the kind heart and tender, loving eyes away off in the lonely little cottage on the border of the forest—"no mother, little girl? Was *that* what you said?"

"Dead," replied the child.

"Did you love her?" asked Tiny, the poet, while his heart wept burning tears.

The girl said not a word, but Tiny heard her sob, and held her hand close in his own, as though he would protect her, even if he were blind, while he said aloud —

"Lead me to the physician, little friend."

Quietly and swiftly she led him, and as they

went, Tiny never once thought what if any of the great folks who once courted and praised him should see him led on foot through the streets by a little beggar girl, himself looking hardly more respectable than the poorest of all beggars !

“Shall I ring the door bell?” asked she, at length coming to a sudden halt.

“Ring it,” said he.

But before she could do that the house door opened, and the physician himself appeared, prepared for a drive ; his carriage was already in waiting at the door.

“Here he is,” exclaimed the girl : and at the same moment a gruff voice demanded,

“What do you want, you two, eh? Speak quick, for I’m off.”

In one word Tiny told what it was he wanted.

“Blind, eh?” said the doctor, stooping and looking into the pale face of the unhappy singer ; “*born* blind ! I can do nothing for you, sir. John ! drive the horses away from that curb-stone.”

He stepped forward, as he spoke, as if about to leave the children, but he stood still again, the next minute, arrested by the sound of Tiny's indignant voice.

"Born blind!" the singer cried—"no more than you were, sir. If you knew how to use your eyes to any good purpose, you never would say such a thing. Since I was ill I've been blind, but never a moment before."

"Come into the house a minute," said the doctor, who had been carefully studying Tiny's face during the last few seconds—"come in, and I'll soon settle that point for you."

"For yourself, you mean," said Tiny in an under tone, as he and the beggar girl went in.

"What's that you carry?" said the physician—"lay down your pack for a moment."

But Tiny would not do that. He had taken up his Harp in much the same spirit as if it had been a cross, and he was determined never to lay it down again, until he came to his father's house. So he merely said, "Don't call it a

pack—it was a Harp, once, but now it's only some bits of wood and cord."

"Broken!" said the doctor: and you would have been in doubt, if you had heard him, as to whether he meant Tiny's Harp or Heart. "Broken! ah," and he seemed to get a little new light on the subject when he looked again into Tiny's face. "Ah," he said again, and still more thoughtfully; "now! about those eyes. You got into a great rage just now, when I told you that you were born blind. On a closer examination of them I am still tempted to think that if you were not born blind, you never had the full use of your eyes. How are you going to prove to me that I'm mistaken? If you can prove that it came after your sickness,"—he hesitated a little—"I'm not so sure but that something might be done for you."

At that Tiny's anger was not much lessened; and he was in doubt as to what he should do, until the child said to him, "Sing to him about your mother." The words had the effect of a

broad ray of light streaming into a dark and dismal place, and without another word Tiny began to sing. His voice was faint and broken; it never once rose into a high strain of pride, as if he had his merits as a singer to support; he sung with tears, and such pathos as singer never did before, of his Mother and her Love. By the words of his song he brought her there into that very room, with her good and pleasant looks, her loving eyes, and tender smile, so that they who heard could also behold her. He sung of all that she had been to him in his childhood, of the brightness she made in their home, of all that she had done for him, and concluded with the prayerful longing that his eyes might once more receive their sight, that so he might behold her.

“The doctor is weeping,” whispered the little girl in Tiny’s ear.

It was a long time before the doctor spoke—but at length he arose, and laid some silver bits in Tiny’s hand—and he said, “I cannot help you. But what you have to do is to go to the

BEAUTIFUL GATE—and there you will find a physician famous for the cure of such cases as yours. True enough you were n't *born* blind—far from it. I ask your pardon for the mistake. I wish there were more blind in the way you were. Go your way to the BEAUTIFUL GATE."

As the doctor spoke he arose and walked quickly towards the door, and the children followed him out. All at once Tiny recollected that they had yet one very important thing to learn, and he cried out:

"But, sir, which way shall we go in order to arrive at the BEAUTIFUL GATE."



IX.

Too late! while he spoke the doctor stepped into his carriage, the coachman closed the door with a loud bang and drove away—and Tiny and the little girl were left quite in the dark as to what they should do next. For a long time they stood still in perfect silence—at last Tiny

said, "Lead the way, little girl — for I am blind and cannot see. Come! we will go on — if you have an idea that we shall ever come to the Beautiful Gate."

"In all my life I never heard of it before," said she sadly.

"But I have," cried Tiny trying to keep his courage up by speaking brave words. "Come on with me!" yet in spite of his words he held fast to the girl's hand, and she led him down the street.

Presently, towards nightfall, they came up to a crowd of people, a mob of men and boys who were quarreling.

Well did Tiny understand the angry sound — and as for the girl walking with him, she trembled with fear and said, "Shall we turn down this street? they are having a terrible fight. I am afraid you will be hurt."

"Not I," said Tiny,—"is the sun near setting?"

"It has set," said the girl.

“And does the red light shine on the men’s faces?” asked the poet.

“Yes,” answered the girl wondering.

“On the night when I first came into this city’s streets it was so. My harp was perfect then; but, it was the Voice, and not the other music, that the people cared for when I sang. Wait now.”

The little girl obediently stood still, and all at once Tiny began to sing. None of his gay songs sung at feasts, and revels, or on holidays—but a song of peace, as grand and solemn as a psalm; and the quarreling men and boys stood still and listened, and before the song was ended, the ring-leaders of the fight had crept away in shame. Other voices then began to shout in praise of the young stranger, who with a few simple words had stilled their angry passions. “The brave fellow is blind,” said they, “we will do something good for him!” and one, and another, and another, cried out, “Come with us, and we will do you good.”

But instead of answering a word, Tiny went his way as if he were deaf as a post, as well as blind as a bat, and by his side, holding his hand close, went the little beggar girl.

Until they came in the increasing darkness to a narrow, crooked lane — and met a woman who was running, crying, with a young child in her arms.

“What is this?” asked Tiny.

“A woman, pale as death, blood on her forehead, with a child in her arms,” said the girl.

“Wait!” shouted Tiny, stopping just before the woman; his cry so astonished her that she stood, in an instant, as still as a statue. “What is it that you want?”

“Food! medicine! clothes! a home!” answered she with a loud cry.

“Give me the child — take this — get what you need and I will wait here with the little one,” said Tiny.

Without a word the woman gave her child — it was a poor little cripple — into his arms; and

then she went on to obey him ; and softly on the evening air, in that damp, dismal lane, arose the songs which Tiny sang to soothe and comfort the poor little creature. And in his arms it slept, hushed by the melody, a slumber such as had not in a long time visited its eyes.

Wonderful singer ! blessed songs ! sung for a wretched sickly stranger who could not even thank him ! But you think they died away upon the air, those songs ? that they did no other good than merely hush a hungry child to sleep ?

A student in an attic heard the song, and smiled, and murmured to himself, “That is like having a long walk in the woods, and hearing all the birds sing.”

A sick girl who had writhed upon her bed in pain all the day heard the gentle singing voice, and it was like a charm upon her — she lay resting in a sweet calm, and said, “Hark ? it is an angel !” A blind old man started up from a troubled slumber, and smiled a happy smile that said as plain as any voice, “It gives me back

my youth, my children, and my country home ;” and he smiled again and again, and listened at his window, scarcely daring to breathe lest he should lose a single word. A baby clad in rags, and sheltered from the cold with them, a baby in its cradle — what do you think that cradle was? as truly as you live nothing but a box such as a merchant packs his goods in ! that baby, sleeping, heard it, and a light like sunshine spread over its pretty face. A thief skulking along in the shadow of the great high building heard that voice and was struck to the heart, and crept back to his den, and did no wicked thing that night. A prisoner who was condemned to die heard it in his cell near by, and he forgot his chains, and dreamed that he was once more innocent and free ; a boy playing with his mates, and loved and trusted by them.

At length the mother of the crippled infant came back, and brought food for her child, and a warm blanket for it, and she and Tiny and the beggar girl, Tiny’s companion, ate their supper

there upon the sidewalk of that dark, narrow lane, and then they went their separate ways—Tiny and his friend taking the poor woman's blessing with them, going in one direction, and the mother and her baby in another, but they all slept in the street that night.

The next morning by daybreak Tiny was again on his way, down that same long, narrow, dingy street, the little girl still walking by his side. Swiftly they walked, and in silence, like persons who are sure of their destination, and know that they are in the right way, though they had not said a word to each other on that subject since they set out in the path.

What is that?" at length asked Tiny, stopping short in the street.

"A tolling bell," said the girl.

"Do you see a funeral?"

"Yes—do n't you?"

Tiny made no answer at first—at length he said—"Let us go into the church-yard," and he waited for the beggar girl to lead the way—

which she did, and together they went in at the open church-yard gate.

As they did so a clergyman was thanking the friends who had kindly come to help bury the mother of the orphan children. Tiny heard that word, and he said to the girl, whose name, I ought long ago to have told you, was Grace, he said, "Are there many friends with the children?"

"No," she answered sadly.

"Are the people poor?" he asked.

"Yes, very poor," said she.

Then Tiny stepped forward when the clergyman had done speaking, and without the least permission raised a Hymn for the Dead, and a prayer to the Father of the fatherless.

When he had made an end, he stepped back again, and took the hand of Grace, and walked away with her in the deep silence, for everybody in the church-yard was weeping. But as they went through the gate the silence was broken, and Tiny heard the clergyman saying, "Weep no longer, children — my house shall

be your home — my wife shall be your mother. Come, let us go back to our home.”

And Grace and Tiny went their way. On, and on, and on, through the narrow filthy street, out into the open country. Through a desert, and a forest, and it seemed as if poor Tiny would sing his very life away. For wherever those appeared who seemed to need the voice of human pity, or brotherly love, or any act of charity, the voice and hand of Tiny were upraised. And every hour, which ever way he went, he found **THE WORLD HAD NEED OF HIM!**

They had no better guide than that with which they set out on their search for the **BEAUTIFUL GATE**. But Tiny's heart was opened, and it led him wherever there was misery, and want, and sin, and grief, and flowers grew up in the path he trod, and sparkling springs burst forth in desert places.

And then as to his blindness.

Fast he held by the hand of the beggar-girl as they went on their way together, but the film

was withdrawing from his eye balls. When he turned them up towards the Heaven if they could not yet discern that, they could get a glimpse of the earth! So he said within himself, "Surely we are in the right way — we shall yet come to the Beautiful Gate, and I shall have my sight again. Then will I hasten to my father's house, and when all is forgiven me, I will say to my mother, Receive this child I bring thee for a daughter, for she has been my guide through a weary way; and I know that my mother will love my little sister Grace."

"And what then," asked a voice in Tiny's soul, "What then wilt thou do?"

"Labor, till I die!" exclaimed Tiny aloud, with flashing eyes.

"But for what, Poet, wilt thou labor?"

"FOR THE POOR WORLD THAT NEEDS ME," bravely cried he with a mighty voice.

"Ah," whispered something faintly in his ear with a taunting voice, that pierced his heart like a sharp sword — "ah, you said that once before — and fine work you made of it!"

Tiny made no answer to this taunt, with words, but with all the strength of his great poet mind he cried again, "For the poor world that needs me," and the vow was registered in Heaven, and angels were sent to strengthen him in that determination—him who was to sing the New Song to the Lord.

A long way further Grace and Tiny walked together on their journey—they walked in silence, thinking so fast that, without knowing it, they were almost on a run in the attempt their feet were making to keep pace with their thoughts. At length Grace broke the silence with a sudden cry.

"Oh Tiny, what is this!"

Tiny looked up at the sound of her voice, and then he stood stock still as if he were turned to stone.

"Oh Tiny, can you see?" again exclaimed Grace, who was watching her companion's face in a great wonder, it became so changed all at once. "Oh Tiny, Tiny can you see?" she cried

again, in terror, for he did not answer her, but grew paler and paler, swaying to and fro like a reed in the wind, until he fell like one dead upon the ground, saying—“My home! my home—and the Beautiful Gate is here!”

Just then an old man came slowly from the forest, near to which they had come in their journey. His head was bent, he moved slowly like one in troubled thought, and as he walked he said to himself, “Long have I toiled, bringing these forest trees into this shape—and people know what I have done—of their own free will they call it a Beautiful Gate. But oh, if I could only find the blind one lying before it ready to be carried through it to his mother! then indeed it would be beautiful to me. Oh Tiny! oh my child, when wilt thou return from thy long wanderings.”

“Please sir,” said a child’s voice—it was the voice of our little Grace, you know—“please sir, will you come and help me?” and she ran back to the place where Tiny lay.

Swiftly as a bird on wing went Josiah with the child. Without a word he lifted up the senseless Poet and the Broken Harp, and with the precious burden passed on through the Beautiful Gate of the Forest, into the cottage Home—Grace following him!

Once more the Broken Harp hung on the kitchen wall — no longer broken. Once more the swallows and the poet slept side by side, in their comfortable nests. Once more old Kitty's eyes grew bright. Once more Josiah smiled. Again a singing voice went echoing through the world, working miracles of good. Rich men heard it and opened their purses. Proud men heard it and grew humble. Angry voices heard it and grew soft. Wicked spirits heard it and grew beautiful in charities. The sick, and sad, and desolate heard it and were at peace. Mourners heard it and rejoiced. The songs that voice sang, echoed through the churches, through the streets; and by ten thousand thousand firesides they were sung again and yet again. But all

the while the great Heart, the mighty, loving, Human Heart from which they came, was nestled in that little nest of home on the border of the forest, far away from all the world's temptations, in the safe shelter of a household's love.

Now if Tiny had ever had A CROSS to bear, and if he bore it well, I shall leave you to decide, dear children.

6



A Story of the Cross.



T had run down—the clock had—and stopped.

Janet took the light with her when she went from the room—how still and dark it was there!—dead stillness, and perfect darkness like that of the grave.

While the clock ticked, and the light burned, the wakeful Canary in the cage above the window hopped to and fro, and chirped occasionally, and pecked at the bit of fish bone with which the wires were ornamented; but now, in the silence and gloom, the little creature was

sleeping, with head bent under its wing, and if it dreamed—I wonder if birds do really dream; what do you think about it?—the dream was very pleasant I am sure, for what on earth was there to trouble the heart of that bird?

It led a happy life there in the beautiful cage. But I would not have you imagine that the life was happy because the cage was so fine. No doubt the Canary was more comfortable than it would have been, if the person who had charge of it had not taken such care to make its little home very neat and clean every day; but birds, you know, are not like those foolish people who *will* not be glad, and happy, and songful, unless all their idle, selfish wishes are gratified.

I remember a bird, dead now these five years; it was not a very pretty one, its wings were brown instead of golden, and it lived in a poor old pine cage—but it had the sweetest notes in the world, which it learned from our pastor's linnet.

The pastor's bird had a fine large cage of rose-

wood, and there was a bathing tub and a swing in it;—the corner posts were mounted with bright brass balls, and beautiful flowers were painted on the cage; but do you suppose that the Canary in its old pine house, some of the wires of which were broken and only mended with bits of string—do you suppose that our Canary was not just as happy as the high-bred linnet was?

All day long the bird that I began to tell about sang in the parlor, but at night the cage was taken into the nursery, and hung over the window, as I said. It was the children's fancy, that their pet should have a bed-chamber, as well as themselves.

Fanny and 'Bel were both wide awake. Usually they were fast asleep before this time; but Fanny took a thought to bed with her, and it troubled her, and therefore she could not sleep. And this thought she was sharing with little 'Bel.

Janet, the new nurse-girl, had told Fanny a

sad story about a child whose lot in life was exceedingly hard and disagreeable,—whose father and mother died while she was very young—and after that she had no home of her own. So she was obliged to go and live among strangers—now with one family, and then with another. And some had abused her; they had compelled her to work far beyond her strength; and they cared no more for her, the nurse girl said, for it was herself that she was telling about, than if she had been a spinning jenny, instead of a human Janet.

The girl cried when she told the story, and Fanny cried, too, but when she saw that, the girl said—“Hush, child! there’s no use? Everybody has a CROSS to bear. I have mine—you’ll have yours, you may be sure. Don’t cry.”

This was the story that Fanny told to ’Bel, instead of one of the fairy tales she had told on other nights for her sister; and ’Bel did not fall asleep as she sometimes did when she was trying

to listen. No — nor for a long time after Fanny had stopped speaking. She felt so grieved for Janet!

And the little sisters said to each other, “We will have mamma keep Janet always, and we will be sure not to tease her; we won’t be cross, or rude, and our home shall be her home. She shall live with us always.”

“And if she wants,” said ’Bel, “she may have our Canary to sleep in her room, sometimes.”

“Yes, to be sure,” said Fanny, “but we would n’t do that for everybody.” Yet, though they became quite joyous, thinking of all that they would do on the morrow, and all the days after to-morrow, in order to make Janet happy, and that she might feel sure that she really had a home on earth, there was still another idea that would come back and trouble Fanny. For a long time she lay and thought upon it quietly, but at last she whispered, “’Bel?”

’Bel was asleep, and made no reply.

Fanny was so bent on expressing what was in

her mind that she said again, and in quite a loud whisper,

“’Bel! did Johnny say that he would take us in his sleigh, to-morrow?”

“Yes,” answered ’Bel; but she was not yet quite awake.

Fanny was going on to say,

“Aren’t you glad we are going to school at last?” —

But just at that instant the moon came out from behind a cloud, and its light streamed through the window and fell upon the bed. And Fanny was so startled and surprised by the sudden flowing in of light, that she forgot what she had intended to say.

There was a rose tree, whose branches had been trained upon the brick wall of the house. Some of these branches were so trained that they formed a very pretty shade for the window in summer time. But now, it being winter, the stems were all bare, and the moonlight falling upon these, cast their shadows within the room,

and Fanny, watching them, fancied that these shadows fell upon the wall in the form of a cross — which they really did.

This seemed all the more strange to Fanny, because she had been thinking so much about the cross, and when all at once the shadow disappeared, and the room became very dark, she began to believe there was some odd witch-work going on, and she was afraid, and hid her face under the bed-clothes. But in a minute more, ashamed of her fear, Fanny sat up in the bed and looked out of the window. The moon seemed to be just sailing out from beyond a great cloud — so that was all the magic there was about it! — a cloud had passed between the earth and the moon! — and Fanny laughed when she thought what a trifle it was that had frightened her so much.

It was now bright as day in the room. You could have seen to read there without the least difficulty. Fanny looked for the cross. There it was on the wall — its outline was perfect.

Then her eyes glanced about the room. Luof looked fiercer and handsomer than ever — this was a portrait of Uncle Henry's splendid Newfoundland dog, and Johnny had hung it up in his sister's room, because the walls of his own room were covered with pictures already. They were all very fond of this portrait — 'Bel thought it a great deal better than it would be to have the real living animal among them, for pictures never bark and growl, though oftentimes they look as if nothing would please them better, if they only could contrive to find the voice!

There, full in sight, was the little table with the book-case, in which the girls kept their books — a nice lot they had; — there were fairy tales, and books of poetry, and history, and travel, — very precious were all these; and Fanny could have told you all their names if you had asked her to do so; still it was only for a moment that she thought of them now. It was of THE CROSS that she was thinking. On another table, just under the window sill, was the toy house; this,

too, the little wakeful girl could see distinctly when her eyes were directed that way, but it was only for a moment that she thought of 'Bel's doll, and its beautiful new dress. It was of the cross that she was thinking. The cross! The cross!

It was all about what Janet had told her that she thought;—how Janet had said that everybody had a cross of their own to bear. Now was this true that the nurse girl said? Why must everybody bear a cross? Must she, and 'Bel, and Johnny? Really and truly? Fanny could not believe it. More especially when she thought of 'Bel, who was so bright and pretty. To bear a cross—that must be dreadful. What did it mean? What did it really mean? That was what she asked herself again and again. Then she thought of Janet. Why, it meant to lose father and mother, and to be very poor, and then be compelled to go out into the world and have no home—to work for people; and to sit, and eat, and sleep, where the people chose to

have them—and to do whatever the people told them to do. That was what it meant—yes, it must certainly mean that. Now would all this happen to Johnny, and 'Bel, and herself? No, it could not be possible. Fanny did not believe a word of it,—what a wicked story it was that Janet had told! And yet, when Fanny went to sleep, she was still wondering what *her* cross would be.

She did not know, she could not guess even, though before she closed her eyes, she was so careful to place herself in that particular position in which she always slept, because her spine was diseased, and she was growing up in deformity—a crooked, sickly little girl.

II.

The next day, as it had been arranged, Fanny and 'Bel went, for the first time, to the new school; and as he had promised to do, Johnny carried them in his sleigh.

With great impatience had they looked forward to the time when this school should be opened. For it was to be taught by a lady whom they knew very well, and loved very much, and 'Bel said that she was the best story-teller in the world;—but 'Bel was a very little girl, and said a great many absurd things that everybody laughed at. It is not probable that she knew all about the thousand and one good story-tellers there are in the world!

It was a short and very happy day to 'Bel, just such an one as she had anticipated. But it was a long, dark day to Fanny—the longest and the darkest she had ever known. However, it came to an end at last, and no one knew how much she had been troubled by something she had heard.

In the morning she was standing for a few moments alone by the stove in the school room, and at a little distance were two older and larger girls; neither of them had she ever seen before. One of these girls, looking at Fanny,

said in a whisper, but Eanny distinctly heard her,

“Is she not pretty, Helen?”

And the other made some reply that Fanny could not hear. Then the first speaker said very gently,

“What a pity! but I should love her all the more, I’m sure. She looks so very patient.”

Then in an instant it flashed across the little girl’s mind—she knew why they pitied her; also she knew why her mother had said, when they all talked about the new school at home—

“My darling, I had rather you would not go to school yet, for a year or two: but if you wish so much to go, and papa thinks it best, why,”—and Fanny remembered how seriously her mother smiled when ’Bel climbed up on her father’s knee, and kissed him until he said, “Yes, yes! you shall both go to school—yes, certainly!”

And yet, though so much was now explained

to Fanny, she could not have told even then what was the cross that she must bear.

Night came again ; and again the young sisters were lying side by side in the silence and darkness of their pleasant chamber. In the silence, I said, yet the clock was ticking loudly ; and the Canary hopped from one perch to another, and from time to time pecked at the fish bone — but it did not chirp or sing — and we do not say that a ticking clock and a restless bird break the silence, — when we are very busy with our thoughts, we have no hearing for such things. And Fanny and 'Bel were very busy thinking. Presently 'Bel said, —

“ It's the very pleasantest day I ever spent in all my life. I hope we shall go to school to Miss Lansing *always!* do'nt you, Fanny? And if you'll only just tell me that story about THE WITCH IN THE WELL, I'll go to sleep in a minute.”

And so Fanny told the story — it was the prettiest of all she knew. And, to be sure, 'Bel

was asleep before it was half through; she knew nothing about the ache that was in Fanny's heart.

The moon shone bright and clear again that night—brighter and clearer than it did the last night,—and if there was any difference, it was that the “shadow of the cross” on the wall was more distinct to Fanny's eyes than it had been the night before.

When she raised herself in the bed, and looked at little 'Bel as she slept so quietly, Fanny thought to herself—“I shall never sleep in that way again,”—and indeed she began to wonder within herself, if it was likely that she should ever sleep at all again. But even while she wondered thus, it was as much as she could do to keep her eyes open;—and the tears which for a few moments flowed so hot and fast down her cheeks, ceased to gather in her eyes; and presently she slumbered as peacefully and happily, even as little 'Bel, and the last thing she thought about while awake was the verse of the

Psalm her father read that night — “He giveth his beloved in their sleep.” But though she remembered the verse, she did not know half its beautiful, deep meaning. I wonder if *you* know it, who are reading at this very minute about Fanny Ray?

But what happened to her in her sleep that night, was the strangest of all. I must tell you about FANNY’S DREAM.

She was with ’Bel at school. And first she heard a trumpet sound. It was ten thousand times louder than the tiny, tinkling brass bell Miss Lansing rung in the school-room. Louder than the clock in the court house, that told all the villagers of every new hour as it came. Louder even than the great bell in the church belfrey, which people could hear off in the country, three miles away, on a Sunday. And a more powerful sound than that, either from trumpet or bell, Fanny had never thought there could be. It was a mighty, yet a sweet sound; and the dreamer thought, Surely nobody

in all the world can help hearing the sound of that trumpet,—and she said to herself beside, It is a great wonder if the dead do not hear it, for the echo seems to fill all the air, and to shake the earth.

She was in the school-room when the great trumpet sounded. And immediately when they heard it, as with one impulse, the teacher and all the children arose, and went out in silence, looking at each other, and wondering what that blast of the trumpet should mean. And Fanny and 'Bel went hand in hand at first. And the teacher said, by a look, for Fanny heard no sound of a voice, "Be cautious—there's no need of such haste."

Some of the scholars there were that seemed neither to hear the trumpet, nor to notice what the teacher said with her eyes, after they were once outside the school-room door. But they began noisily to chase about, and play with each other in the yard in the midst of which the school-house stood. For it was summer, and

not winter, in Fanny's dream ; and she saw, as plain as any one ever saw with eyes wide open, how the grass in the fields was beautiful and green — and that the brook was dancing along as merrily as could be — and that the dandelions shone “like stars in the grass” — and the orchard trees were all covered over with blossoms ; so of course it was summer in her dream.

But there were many of the scholars who followed on after the teacher. Not, however, because she led them, — for she did not. She also seemed guided, just as they were, by something they could neither see nor hear — for it certainly was not the trumpet sound that made them all move in the direction they did. As I said before, the trumpet seemed to fill the whole world with sound, and none could tell if it came from east, west, north, or south — and it was no more to be seen than is the wind. And as to the wind, you know that no man can see that, or tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, as our Saviour said when he was on the earth.

And the teacher and the children went on together rapidly, but without noise or confusion, until they came to the foot of a great hill; — upon that hill no grass grew, no trees were there; and in many places the rock was quite bare, and stood out from the yellow earth in sharp points. It was a wild, rugged height. Would they climb it? Could they if they tried? Also no sunlight fell upon this hill — but a dark, solemn shade spread over it; only when the teacher and the children looked up to the very top of it, could they see that the sun was shining thereon — and oh! how Fanny Ray's heart beat when she saw upon that summit the great cross — it was like a crown to the hill — and the sunshine fell so brightly over it as to make her eyes fill with tears when she looked thereon. She shaded her eyes with her hand, and began to think. Must not all this mystery have some deep, beautiful meaning? And she said to herself, "Surely, 'Bel and I will learn *here* what our cross is." And as she said it, Fanny perceived

for the first time, that 'Bel was not with her — they had been separated in the crowd.

At any other time Fanny would have felt greatly alarmed, both for 'Bel and for herself, separated and alone thus in a crowd. For a great number of people were now gathering together, not one of whom had she ever seen before. But now she was not in the least afraid, for all the people were looking up at the cross, just as she herself was doing.

While she stood and gazed with all the rest, Fanny heard suddenly a voice, that was not like any voice she had ever heard before, calling to her. It seemed to come from the cross on the hill-top; and then she distinctly saw a Hand. It beckoned to her from that cross! For an instant Fanny was in doubt and bewilderment. Had she *really* heard THAT VOICE? — had she *truly* seen THAT HAND? — or was it all only a fancy? While she asked herself these questions the little girl looked around her, afraid to speak or move,—she felt very faint, and dizzy beside;

and would have fallen, but for a Hand that upheld her. And yet, when she turned herself, quickly, that she might see who it was that supported her, she perceived that she was standing apart from all the crowd, alone by herself—and then, what was still more strange, she saw that, without knowing what she did, she had begun to climb the hill.

She was ascending towards the cross. But now the hill seemed to have grown into a mountain—and further off than ever stood that cross, and the way was even more difficult and rugged than it had appeared to be. And, poor Fanny! she was very faint and weak, and half the time when she looked up she could see no cross at all, it was even gloomier and darker around the place where it had stood, (and where, though she could not see it, she believed it was still standing,) than along the path through which she went.

If only little 'Bel were with her!—or if any one were with her;—if a bird would only sing,

and break the silence! — or if she could see any flowers growing by the way — or if the sun would only shine! and in her dream, and with her own voice, Fanny called aloud, “ Oh ’Bel, come with me ! ” But ’Bel slept on, and Fanny slept on; and in the dream went up the hill alone,—still alone.

At last, after long toiling, she was fairly arrived at what seemed to her the summit of the mountain. And all was dark there. The weary child sat down upon the rock against which her foot had stumbled; she was afraid to go farther; no voice was calling her now,—no hand was leading,—there was no sunlight up there where she had thought to find it.

She looked back upon the long way by which she had come. Oh, how beautiful! There, at the foot of the mountain, lay the village, and the meadows, and the gardens; and over them all was the sunlight bright and warm! She could see the dandelions in the grass — the brook dancing on its way through the fields and the

wood — the old school-house — the church, and — yes, there it was! how distinctly she could see it from the high mountain in the dream! — her own father's house. The rose-tree that was trained over the nursery window was in full bloom, and the Canary's cage was hung in the window, and the bird, Fanny knew, was talking to the roses. But what he said to them, that Fanny could not hear, because she was listening again to the sound of the trumpet, which seemed to fill heaven and earth with its grand, solemn melody. And while she listened she bent her head upon her hand, and forgot the lovely scene upon which she had been looking, — forgot even the wish she had just felt, that she might go back to the dear village, and remain there.

For the trumpet seemed to be saying something to her. What was it? That was more than Fanny for a long time could tell. Though, while she listened she could but say to herself, "If I wait, and am patient, and try to understand it, I shall surely be able very soon." And

true enough, it was presently with her the same as if she had been deaf, and a physician had made her to hear—or, as if she had taken up a book, written in some foreign language, and without study found that she could read it—for the voice of the trumpet was really a Voice, and it said to her,

“Arise, and go thy way—thy cross is waiting for thee.”

So she should have it at last! What Janet had said was true after all! It was true that she had been led up that mountain; and some one she could not see was still watching over her and caring for her! She was not after all a foolish, lost girl, that had wandered away from home to die up there alone, in the wild, dark place! And in her dream poor Fanny rejoiced.

When she again arose she cast another look down the mountain, before she began to ascend further. And lo! the hill was now nearly covered with persons who had set out for the sum-

mit, even as she had done ; and there, toiling among the rest, was the darling little 'Bel !

Then Fanny said to herself—for now she felt very happy and courageous —“ I will wait here for 'Bel ” — and then the next minute she thought —“ No, I will go and meet her, and help her along—poor 'Bel, she will be so weary, ” — but before she could take a single step down the hill, the Voice said,

“ Go up ! Go up ! ” very sternly and with a mighty emphasis it was said — and Fanny dared not linger any longer.

Fear drove her on at first, but soon the fear passed away, and in her desire to reach the end of her journey the little girl's curiosity, about those who were coming after her, disappeared.

And at last the mountain top was really reached. Then Fanny thought, in her dream, that she should die ; her strength went from her, — she fell upon the ground, — yet she felt no fear now — she was at peace.

But she did not fall asleep in her dream --- the

dream did not end here—for now upon the mild air rose the sound of a Voice that was not like the voice of the trumpet, nor like her mother's voice, nor like any that she had ever heard in all her life before, for it was sweeter and tenderer, and also more powerful—it said to her, “MY CHILD!”

And Fanny was lifted from the ground in her dream, and when she raised her eyes she perceived that she was leaning against the great cross, and the Hand that had beckoned to her to come from the crowd, was reaching down from it, and the Hand rested on her head, as if it would bless her—even her, poor Fanny Ray.

Surely a blessing had now been pronounced upon her—yes, of that Fanny was quite certain, when she felt the tender pressure of the Hand upon her head;—and in her dream, Fanny was so happy that her heart sang for joy. Then she remembered little 'Bel, and turned her eyes again to the mountain path, that she might see what had become of her. And there was the

child, still coming on, yet staying sometimes by the way, and turning to look back, as she herself had done ! Fanny trembled when she saw this wavering and weariness, lest the little one should be tempted to return to the paths and the meadows which looked so very pleasant from every place, except from that place last gained, where Fanny now stood—beneath the cross of the Saviour.

But even while she feared, Fanny leaned with yet more and more reliance upon that sure support, and when her heart was most like to cry out in its fear for 'Bel, she still looked upon the cross, and the cry was changed to a prayer—and this was the prayer ; that the Voice that had called, and the Hand that had saved her, would do the same for the little lonely pilgrim. Yet, even when she made this prayer, Fanny ended it with, "*Thy will be done,*" because she felt that the Deliverer would be sure to do all things right and well.

And now, again the Voice was speaking from

on high and it said — “The cross that I gave thee to bear, my child, wilt thou not crucify on it all thy pride and selfishness, and be glad to bear it because I gave it to thee ?”

And all Fanny Ray’s heart seemed to leap up in the answer she made : “Yea, Lord, I thank thee — I thank thee for the cross !”

The sound of her own voice, so earnest and so loud, wakened the little girl.

The sun was shining — the Canary singing — tick, tick, went the clock — there stood Janet by the bed-side, come to waken them — the dream was all over — a strange, beautiful dream, — but it had ended so provokingly, thought Fanny, she had neither seen in it whether ’Bel really reached the top of the mountain, nor learned what cross either of them was to bear ! That was the worst of all — for she was sure that if the dream had been dreamed through, no matter what the end of it had been, she would have felt strong enough to endure anything that was

offered to her as her cross. But the dream was over, and there was no help for it.

Not that day was any explanation given to the dream ; and many a day, and many a year, passed by before it was all made plain to Fanny Ray ; but there came a time at last when she understood it all. She had strength then to bear the knowledge — and she had grace also — grace to thank God for that strength, and to say to Him, “Thy will be done, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer !” Her face was pale with sickness, and her poor body bent with pain in those years, but she was happy and at peace, as all must be, no matter what their suffering and sorrow, if they trust in the good Lord always. Pale she was, and crippled, but everybody loved her — and that our Father in heaven also loved her, we all knew. How did we know it ? Are you asking that, my little friend ? Ponder it in your heart — and then you will understand it all, better, oh, far better than I know how to tell.

The Little Street Singers.



HE boy carried a hand-organ; it was much too heavy for his strength. One thought his back would surely be broken every time he attempted to lift it.

The girl had a tambourine and the two played together and sang "Home! sweet Home." But they had n't a home anywhere on the face of the wide earth.

A crowd collected around them — and after the children had sung their best pieces, the girl went around with the tambourne in her hand, passing from one person to another, and whoever chose to do so dropped in some money. There was one boy who put in five-pence, and took ten-pence out in change! — I saw him do it from my window. Much good may the cheat do him — the fellow!

But the girl did n't notice him. She seemed hardly to notice at all whether those to whom she offered the contribution box gave her anything or not — for she was very tired, and her head ached, and she would have given all she had in the world to have crept into some shed, and lain down there for a little sleep ; her feet were so sore, and her head ached so dreadfully.

She said in the morning to Thomas, "I am very tired and sick ; oh, do let me stay in with you to-day."

Thomas was the man who traveled with Jack and Nanny, though he was not their father, nor brother ; and often the children wondered how they ever happened to fall into the hands of so wicked a person.

But though when he looked at Nanny he must have known that she was speaking the truth — that she was really very tired and sick — the man only laughed at her, and called her a little fool, and said she was saying what she knew was a wicked lie. So he sent them out in the rain,

and the monkey was dressed in its old clothes, for the rain would have spoiled his new suit; but there was no danger that the rain would spoil the old rags which the children wore.

He sent them out, and they wandered about the streets all day—but late in the afternoon Nanny said,

“Jack, if Thomas kills me for it, I must lie down—I believe I shall die.”

The boy looked at his sister,—her pale face frightened him,—where could they go? What should they do? They were full a mile from the house where Thomas stopped, and how could they ever walk back? Even while they were considering what they should do, Nanny was obliged to sit upon some shop steps to rest—so it was out the question that they should attempt to return to the inn, until she had taken some rest.

Further down the street, at a short distance from them, Jack saw a stable, and the door was open. Without saying a word, he left Nanny,

and ran down to see if it was occupied. To his great joy he found the doors wide open, nobody there, and the manger filled with nice fresh straw.

Jack was not a strong boy, and he was very weary with carrying the organ all day, and walking about so far, but his strength seemed to come back to him when he returned and looked at Nanny, where she sat on the door step, so faint and pale. Taking his organ, which he had left beside her, upon his back, he more than half carried her down the street to the stable — then he climbed up into the manger, and drew her after him. And all the poor, sick child could say was, “Oh, Jack! how good you are — don’t let’s *ever* go back to Thomas.”

And the boy said kindly, “I’ll make it all right — don’t worry — take a good sleep, and I’ll keep watch here.”

And Jack sat up there in the manger beside his sister, and the monkey sat on the hand organ, and Nanny’s tambourine lay on the floor be-

side it, and it was as still in the stable as if there had n't been a creature in it.

Jack sat there with his eyes half closed, but he was wide awake — he had so many things on his mind, how could he think of sleeping?

A fine scolding they would get when they went back to Thomas — that was very certain; but who cared? What if he gave them a beating? — even that would'nt kill them — it was what they often had to bear. Yet, no! If Thomas attempted to beat Nanny now, he would meet with some opposition. As for himself, Jack had no fear; he rather liked the thought of living with the man until he might some day find an opportunity for punishing their tyrant in a suitable way. It would, besides, be very stupid in them to attempt to fly from him; for Thomas knew everything, and would be sure to find them again, and then — Jack trembled to think of such a flight, and such a capture!

As to Nanny — the moment she lay down there

in the manger her eyes closed — she fell into a heavy sleep. And so anxious was Jack that she should have a good rest, that though it began to get dark in the stable, he was very careful to make no noise, lest he should waken her.

But at last Nanny stirred — she was awaking — she whispered, “Jack?”

“Here I am,” he answered.

“Is that Thomas I hear?”

“No — it is nothing.”

“Isn’t it? Oh Jack! I’ve seen the most beautiful sight!”

“What was it?” said Jack.

“Come closer — are you there? I can’t see you.”

“No wonder, for it’s as dark as pitch here. But I’ll tell you what we’ll do — wait till we get started, for we had better be off; and then I’ll have you tell all about it. Come! you have had such a nice rest. How is your head?”

Nanny never disputed with Jack. He always had things in his own way, so far as she was

concerned, for he was always contriving things to say and do for her that would make her happier, and more comfortable. So she lifted her head, and tried to rise, as he bade her, but she could not do it. Jack did not observe the effort she was making; he was busy getting his organ strapped upon his back.

“I’ll tell you what it was that I dreamed *here*; I’d rather tell it now, before I forget it, my head feels so badly. It was all about a beautiful home that I went to ——”

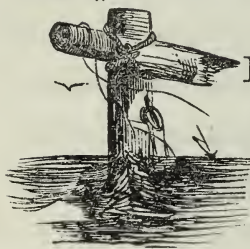
“But,” said Jack, interrupting her, “I hear them coming. They are leading a horse, and there’s a man with a lantern. Slip down, and don’t make a noise. I guess we can creep out without their seeing; come!”

Nanny made no noise, but neither did she otherwise obey him; and when in a moment more the man came in with the horse, he found a little dead child lying in the manger. Nanny had gone away to the beautiful home sooner than Jack could think!

And there stood the poor fellow, with the organ on his back, and the monkey perched upon the top of it, and under Jack's arm was Nanny's tambourine. He was ready to go on his journey, but her journey was at an end—she would never sing “Home! sweet Home!” with him again, either in rain-storm or sunshine. Happy Nanny; the golden doors of the Father's house had opened for the weary little child, and never more would she live in fear of Thomas; never more would she go hungry and cold and sad, for now she was with the angels, and safe from all sorrow in the smile of God.



The Pink Shell and the Sea Weed.



HERE they lay on the beach together — the same sandy bed beneath them — the same sun shining down upon them ; and they both had come up from the same great ocean cave.

Yet they were not at all alike, as one with only half an eye could not help seeing. And, as to their ideas of things, and their own particular feelings, it was a fact that they were not in the least bit alike in these. Excepting in this one thing — they were both exceedingly desirous of changing their place of residence ; and it was this wish that was granted them — for they had lived in the sea, and now were to live on the land, which certainly was a great change for both of them.

The Pink Shell was marvellously pretty, and she knew it. And there was nothing strange

about that; but then, do you think the Shell showed her wisdom in being so very vain and proud about it? Why, only think of it,—she did not make herself,—she lay upon the beach just as she was thrown up out of the deep, deep sea; and for all that she had to do with it, she might just as well have been a clam-shell, as that beautiful pink thing which the Sea Weed looked at with so much admiration. And therefore I say that if it was not a sin, it was at least a great shame, for the Shell to be so vain of her beauty.

They had been thrown by the same wave upon the sea beach—the SHELL and the WEED—and the Shell, much to her horror, lodged in the very midst of the Weed! Oh how she sighed for some lucky gale of fortune that would set her clear of the loathsome heap. Loathsome! yes, that was the very word she used in her complaint.

The Sea Weed was not naturally jealous or suspicious. She could admire the beauty of the

Shell, and not feel in the least annoyed that she herself had but little loveliness to boast of — that she was, in fact, what some plain spoken people would call ugly. But nobody, however homely and humble, likes to be called loathsome. And the remark did not sound well, coming from the Shell, even if it could be imagined that the Weed was not in the least sensitive, and had no feeling whatever.

The Weed could not well help it, she asked rather timidly, yet with perfect distinctness —

“Did you say loathsome?”

“Disgustful!” exclaimed the Shell, looking in every direction except at the Weed that happened to be beneath her.

“You said disgustful,” repeated the Weed, not so timidly as before, but still quite meek in her manner and voice — “are you speaking of me?”

“Insolence!” was all the reply.

The Sea Weed sighed, and for a long time thought the matter over quietly to herself; final-

ly the Shell's mutterings excited a little anger in her, and she said,

"It seems to me that if you are so mightily uncomfortable, Miss Shell, the best thing you can do is to move into another neighborhood. It is n't very pleasant to bear your burden, and be compelled to listen to your insulting remarks. You think yourself very fine and beautiful — I think so too — but for all that, your behavior is neither pretty nor agreeable."

"You are such a fright!" exclaimed Miss Shell, in a rage.

"Well, and what of that," returned the Weed, very coolly,—"I am as I was made, and it's nothing to you whether I'm handsome or ugly. You are at perfect liberty to remove yourself to a place where I shall be out of your sight. And to speak the plain truth, I heartily wish you would do so."

"Whoever heard the like?" exclaimed the Shell.

"I never did, for one," answered the Weed,

“but the fault is all your own. If you take to calling names, you may as well expect to have an answer.”

Just then a man went by on the lonely sea beach — he was speaking aloud, and the heaven, and the earth, and the ocean, the Sea Weed and the Shell, heard what he said: “Speech is great, but silence is greater.”

And the Sea Weed thought to herself, That is a wiser and a better saying than the one I thought so good — it is n’t worth while to answer a fool according to his folly, after all — and I won’t say another word to the Shell, no matter how she provokes me.

And the Sea Weed held to her resolution; — wishing, in the meantime, as heartily as the Pink Shell could, for the lucky gale of fortune that should separate them; for though she could keep silent herself, it was not so very agreeable to be compelled to hear Miss Shell’s continual complaining. For of her complaining there really was no end — it seemed to be the only

thing of which the proud Sea Shell was capable. She had no idea that it was possible for her to make any use of this trial of her patience—it was only groan, groan, groan; grumble, grumble, grumble; wish, wish, wish,—from morning till night.

Well, that lucky gale of fortune did come at last, though in a way that rather mortified Miss Shell; for it was not at all on *her* account that the people walking along the beach exclaimed so joyfully, as if they had found a great prize, when they saw the Sea Weed. It was not on her account that they placed the Sea Weed in a basket, and carried it far away to a place where the roar of the ocean waves was never heard. No—for they did not see the Shell at all.

You think, then, that she was left upon the beach alone—that she slipped through the mass of Weed, and was left there all by herself. That was not the way it happened.

For, in the first place, instead of rejoicing in

the change of place so long desired, the poor thing thought that she was certainly doomed to a violent death, thrust down as she was into darkness, and surrounded on all sides, and nearly suffocated by the loathsome Sea Weed that was above and beneath her. No more fair prospect of sea, and shore, and sky; not a breath of fresh air to sweep away the stifling odor. "Dsgusting," "loathsome," "insolent." She might say that as often as she chose, but there was not much comfort in expressing herself thus when she was really so very miserable — so nearly destroyed. That was certainly no place for showing off her pride, or for parading her beauty.

At last the Shell began to arouse herself, and to make desperate efforts. Must there not be some way of escape? — and if there were, could she not find it? Yes, to her delight she found that *she could* move through her prison house — and though it was always down that she went, at every step, and never up towards the light, the Shell did not think of that, but continued to

descend, and was glad to do so — and at last she reached a wooden barrier. It was the frame work of the basket. How “lucky” that was, she thought — as if there were really any such thing as “luck” in the world! — and then, what was best of all, *she* thought, a short time after the basket was lifted and carried away, and the Shell fell upon the ground, and nobody noticed it in the least. Here for a long time she rested, and owing to the exertions she had made, Miss Shell was quite content to rest here. But after a while the old restless spirit began to make itself heard again; and, oh! if she were only back on the beach! — or, oh! if she could only go once more down into the ocean cave! — or, indeed, anywhere, anywhere in the wide world than just where she happened to be. But, the Shell might turn herself about, and she might move in this direction, and in that direction, and groan and sigh; she had gone just as far as she could go, unless in some way she was aided by somebody more powerful than herself. And as

might be supposed, the Shell became very lonely in her new situation — all was so strange there in the wood — all was so dim and solemn there.

One day she was roused from a slumber at noonday, by the sound of a person walking in the wood. It was a youth who wandered about with his head bent on his breast, lost in thought. But they were not gloomy thoughts he had — they were all about a friend whom he loved very dearly; and he had just been telling her how much he loved her, and had made the discovery that she loved him also. So that this was the very happiest day of the young fellow's life.

Nothing of this knew the Pink Shell, and she said to herself — “If he sees me my fortune is made, for he has a pair of bright eyes in his head, and that's more than I can say for anything else I've seen in this dismal place.”

While the youth walked along with his head bent thus, he was looking for some place where he might sit down and reflect; at last he come

close to the mossy bank where the Shell was, and there he sat down and indulged in the most delightful meditations.

“Selfish!” murmured the Shell; “he thinks of nobody in the world but himself—why can’t he see that *I* am here, and half dead to get away. I am sure I would not in the least trouble him!”

It seemed as if the young man must have heard her complaint, for no sooner was it ended, than he arose quickly, and his eyes fixed upon the very place where she was lying.

“Good luck!” exclaimed the Shell; and a brighter blush seemed to overspread her handsome face.

And when the youth stooped and lifted her, looking so pleasant and so glad, she thought it was a great wonder that she did not swoon with delight. But she kept her senses through it all.

As to the youth himself, he thought it was a most fortunate thing that he had come into the wood that day. He had found such a nice gift

for his friend — and he made a little plan in his mind about the Shell, which he kept to himself.

The next day Miss Shell found herself in a very odd sort of place ; — the handsome youth with whom she had hoped to remain, had some queer project in his head that concerned her ; what could it be ? Why had he left her in that disagreeable garret, in the hands of that dirty workman, who coughed so much, and looked so pale and so distressed ? — what would *he* do with her ? The young man had given this person a great many directions, but of these she could not understand a word. They were both kind-hearted looking men — she did not believe that they meant to destroy her. But then why was she there ? — and of what use were all those bright, sharp tools which lay on the workman's table ? Miss Shell trembled as she asked herself that question.

Oh for the sea side ! — if she could only find herself back on the beach ! — surely, that was the best of all places for a residence ; and bet-

ter and pleasanter it seemed, as day after day went on, and still she remained in the dingy city workshop, watching that distressed, pale, weary looking man at his labor, and listening to the noises of the crowded streets.

The Shell had nothing to do but to think — but no one seemed to think of her — not even the workman to whom the handsome youth gave so many directions.

But soon she had occasion to think another thought, and wish another wish — the poor, proud Shell! She had fancied herself so handsome, so perfect! — and the artist did not agree with her; that is, if one might judge of his thoughts by his deeds. Certainly — yes; it was his intention to destroy her! And the Shell gave herself up for lost, and fainted away with fright, and the last thing she thought was, — “After all, I must have abused the poor Sea Weed — I hope she has forgotten all about it.”

Often the young man went to the artist's work-room. He watched the progress of the work

he had ordered to be done, with the greatest interest—but Miss Shell, during this time, until the work was finished, remained unconscious of all that was going on.

When she awakened at last, all was darkness around her. She heard voices, but nothing could she see, and the Shell groaned inwardly, and said, “Alas! I am become stone blind! that must account for it—the vile workman put out my eyes, and then I fainted.” It was a poor consolation, that thought!

She listened earnestly, and then she spoke again to herself, and said, “Aha! if my eyes are gone my ears are opened,”—and certainly her ears *were* opened, or some other strange thing had happened, for the shell could now understand what was said between the youth and the artist. She knew it was these two that talked together, because, though she could not see them she recognized the voices.

“How much do I owe you?” asked the young man.

“Well—let me see : it is very fine work the gentleman will observe.”

“Yes,” was the reply.

“It tried my eyes sorely to cut so fine a flower, and the dove hovering over the flower, I never did so nice a piece of work as that before.”

“Yes—it’s exquisite,” said the young man with great admiration, evidently.

“It was difficult to cut the cameo,”—(how Miss Shell shuddered as she heard that—‘That means me—it must mean me, and I’ve been cut up with those sharp steel instruments!’ she said to herself with a groan,) “for you see,” resumed the man, stopping to cough after every word, “one false mark might easily have ruined the whole thing.”

“Yes, yes—I see,” said the youth, with a little impatience, “but let me know your charge, my good fellow, I’m in a hurry.”

“Ten dollars.”

The young man said no more, but the shell heard him counting, “Three—five—eight—ten”—and

then he said, "Is that right?" and the artist answered, "Yes — all right — thank you, sir; — but — would you please, sir, to let me look again at the cameo, for a moment? — thank you."

No — the Shell was certainly not blind, — there was now light all around her in a moment, and she saw it, and when to her amazement she looked up into the face of the artist, she saw that his eyes were full of tears — and he said — "Well, if it *is* my work I've never seen any handsomer."

"And to think," said the young man, "a month ago it was only a pretty shell lying in the wood, of no use to anybody. You and I have proved that it was good for something, Mr. Artist."

And they laughed; — the shell did not laugh however — she was greatly indignant that they should have dared to speak of her in such a manner. But what strange thing was it that had happened to her? What had the artist done? Oh, if she could but see herself; she was not blind — that she knew — yet it was very

odd she could not see as she used to do. She could see everything but that she most longed to see — which was, of course, herself!

A moment after the strange darkness again was over and around her, — that is to say, the Shell-cameo was shut up again in a box, and the youth carried it away with him. Down the stairs he went, out into the crowded street, and then there was a long, long way, walked very rapidly; — then up a flight of steps; a careful opening of a door; through a long passage way; up another pair of stairs — then another door was opened — and the Shell found herself no longer in darkness — but when she looked around she saw that she was alone; the young man had left her there alone.

She was lying on a white marble slab that was underneath a large and splendid mirror, and around her were a multitude of shining, beautiful things, whose use she could not guess, whose like she had never seen before.

The Shell-cameo felt the most strange sen-

sation when she thought of herself there alone in that chamber; she had never thought the same thoughts, or felt the same feelings as now. Though it had never entered her head to dream of an apartment so beautiful, though everything around her was so strange, so different from all she had ever seen before, still she could not help thinking, "I am not alone here—some friend or some acquaintance I have known in days past is certainly near me." But as she looked at the lace window curtains, and bed curtains, and the handsome carpet; on the pictures, and the ornaments in the room, and fatigued herself with wondering, she could not arrive at any conclusion as to what it could mean that she should have such thoughts and feelings, for as I said, never had she had the like before.

That same day, in the afternoon, a little lady came singing into the chamber:—a young girl who certainly had just heard of, or done, some pleasant thing, for her face was lovely with the happy smile it wore

She walked about the room, and looked from the windows, and sang like a bird — but it was a long while, at least so it seemed to the Shell, before she went up to the mirror and saw the cameo lying there.

“Now,” said the Shell, “my time has come at last.”

And certainly it had, for the little lady took the cameo, and ran with it to the window, and then back again to the mirror, and all she said was, “Albert!”

“Ah!” said the Shell, with a jealous sigh, “she thinks more of the giver than she does of the gift, after all; but I’m sure of one thing, I shall now see what strange thing it is that has happened to me.”

And as the little lady fastened the cameo upon her bosom, the Shell gazed upon herself, and said with rapture, “Ah, if the Sea Weed could only see me now, what would she say?”

But when she said it, a pang shot through her heart, and the vain Shell fairly blushed — why?

because at that very instant it seemed to her that something whispered,

“Be careful, Miss Shell, what you say or think about the Sea Weed—be careful, be careful!”

But when the Shell thought this all over, she was again very indignant because of the Sea Weed, and she said to herself more proudly than ever, “I would exceedingly like to have that Weed here to see me now; she would perceive that I had found my proper place at last.”

“That may be,” something whispered—and the voice seemed to come from the mirror—“that may be, but be careful, Miss Shell, what you say about the Sea Weed, just be careful, if you please.”

This was all very strange—what *could* it mean? Miss Shell was as much in the dark as when she fancied herself blind because shut up in the box.

I will tell you what it meant. As to the Shell, she found it all out soon enough.

That same afternoon, a little girl, much younger than the little lady who wore the cameo that her friend Albert had given her, came into the beautiful chamber.

“Sister,” she said, hurrying up to the little lady —

“Well,” was the answer she got.

“What is kelp?”

“Kelp? why, it is sea weed burned.”

The cameo gave a start of surprise, and listened eagerly to hear what should come next.

“And so the sea weed, such as we gathered last summer, goes to make glass like that mirror,” pointing to the one before her.

“Yes, that is very true,” said the little lady, “and this cameo, Lily, look at it — Albert gave it to me; it is made of a shell. So you see the ocean gives us a great many curious and beautiful things!”

The poor Pink Shell! she gave a sort of groan, but no words could express her mortification and surprise at that moment. Very well she

knew why it was that she felt that she was near an old acquaintance, when Albert left her on the marble slab underneath the splendid mirror.

No sleep for her that night, when she lay on the slab once more, after the little lady had gone into her bed. But there she was, awake through all the long, dark hours ; so wretched, so miserable—no one can tell how miserable, who has not been kept awake thinking of some duty he is too proud to perform.

But at last there came at midnight a voice from out the mirror, and it said,

“ Pink Shell ! ”

“ What ? ” she answered.

“ Do you know me now ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ What am I ? ”

“ Sea Weed.”

“ Yes, that ’s very true — well, what do you think of *me now*, Pink Shell ? ”

“ I ’m not thinking of you at all.”

“ That ’s honest — I see you ’re not so very

much changed after all ; though I hardly recognized you when you came in."

"Sea Weed, if I'm not changed, *you are*."

"Yes, I know it ; I'm of some use and importance now — besides, I have passed through so many transformations, I hardly know myself."

"They have made you proud."

"Don't say that ! don't say that if you please. I'm of some use, and for that I'm thankful — thankful, do you hear ? — not proud. I hope I'm not so foolish. As I believe I told you long ago, when I was nothing but an ugly weed, according to your way of thinking, I've had nothing to do with making myself, so why should I be proud ?"

"Oh, Sea Weed," began Miss Shell, but there she stopped.

"Well," said the voice from the mirror, speaking very gently, for the Shell seemed to be in great distress.

"Sea Weed," she began again after a long silence, "I hope you'll forget all those silly things

I used to say. I've been so impatient, and so proud — dear me — I've been a great fool — but —— ”

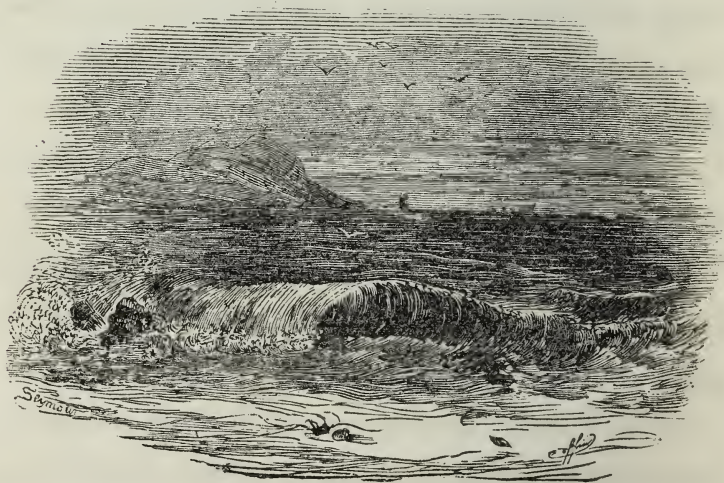
“ Say no more, my beautiful —— ”

“ Don't call me beautiful.”

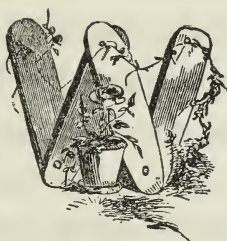
“ What shall I call you? ”

“ Say — Sister, I forgive you,” said Cameo, after a long, long pause.

“ Sister, I have forgotten all about it,” said the mirror, and they never had a quarrel after that day, you may be certain.



Little Alice's Prayer.



HETHER there was anything at all in it—or if it meant anything—that I cannot say; you must be the judge.

But this was what happened, all in the same moment, with some people who lived together in a house on Grand street. Yes — Grand street they called it — but I'm sure I don't know why. They lived in the same house, but they had very little to do with each other; for they were lodgers, and rented the rooms, all except Margaret, who slept in a narrow passage-way in the basement, for she was the servant, and the house was so crowded that there was no other place where she could put herself away, out of sight, when night came.

In the upper story of the house, that is to say in the attic, lived a widow lady and her child,

a little girl not yet six years old. Directly under the skylight was a large rose bush, full of buds and blossoms—and it was as old, and older than Alice, the widow's child; for on the day that she was born her father brought it home, and at that time there was one rose—but one—upon the fragile stem.

How it had grown since that day! It was now a splendid rose bush — almost as tall as Alice herself. And next to her child, the poor widow loved the rose better than all things in the world.

In the day-time it was very pleasant up there in the attic, but at night!—oh, it was gloomy then; for, after Alice was asleep, the widow was alone, and there was nothing to amuse her — and even if there had been she could not have stopped to enjoy it; for she was working day and night, trying to lay by money enough to educate her child, as many another loving mother has done.

Just as the clock struck seven, that night when the strange thing happened, Alice knelt

down beside the little table on which stood the rose bush, and said aloud the Lord's prayer, and after that she continued to kneel and to pray for a moment in silence, as she always did, asking God for whatever thing she most desired.

And what it was she asked for I do not know, but it was very strange—in the same moment that she asked it, a blessing seemed to have fallen on all the hearts that did most need it in the house.

There was Margaret in the basement, with work to do that would keep her busy, tired as she already was, until late at night;—she had just been giving relief to her heavy heart, and the tears she shed were bitter. *Why* should she labor so like a slave, doing her best to please all, and never receive in return gentle words, and pleasant smiles? Her heart cried out for the old friends in fatherland—but they did not answer her. She was alone; and oh, so lonely! Were *you* ever alone, and lonely? Then you will know how to pity her.

The clock struck SEVEN. Margaret looked up ; the old dim lamp seemed to burn more faintly than ever — and there was the great heap of work yet to do — what right had she to be sitting there in the basement, weeping, making such a waste of the time ?

She sprung from her chair, and suddenly, as if some spring had been touched in her sad heart, Margaret began to sing. With a faltering voice at first, for she had wept so violently that she could not control the voice. Her own singing made her smile. “Beautiful music that, to be sure,” said she, and stopping short, she began the verse again. And this time how bravely she sang it ; with a low, but firm, sweet voice, and there was not a break in it from the beginning to the end of the song ; — four verses, — she sang them all.

All this time she was not standing still with folded arms ; a wonderful change had taken place in the appearance of the basement since the clock struck for seven. The old lamp no

longer burned dimly ; it blazed like a torch, and, though it smoked a little, Margaret had drawn the wick up so high, she did not mind that, it looked so cheerful there, and she all at once felt so cheerful, and this was the way she talked to herself—

“Courage, Margaret! Courage, old heart! there’s a good time coming—you are strong, if you’re *not* made of iron, and God rules over all.” And while she talked thus to herself she thought of little Alice up in the attic, and said, for dearly she loved the child, “That is the angel of the house, and it’s right she should sleep away up there, for that room, of all in the house, is nearest to heaven, where she belongs. And if Alice prayed for Margaret I cannot tell—but this I know, the poor Irish girl blessed Alice.

Over the basement was the drawing-room, and it was very brilliant with gas-lights there.

There was too much light—not for the room, for that looked quite splendid, but for the man

in it, who walked to and fro with his head bent on his breast, thinking — thinking — thinking.

They were not such thoughts as he would like to have seen written out upon the wall, so that all who happened to go into the room could read them if they chose. He was wretched with those thoughts ; they made his heart as restless as the waves of the sea — they haunted him in his dreams — and when he was awake, as now, they tempted him. They were his tormentors.

They were having a fierce battle with themselves this night. They had battled thus all day, and now the strife was nearly at an end. You see him — he is going towards the door — it is too light for him there, he shades his eyes with his hands — he will go out where there is darkness.

But — why does he stop just as he reaches the door ? Why does he fold his arms upon his breast, and lean against the wall, and think again ? Do but see how calm his face is growing ! — he does not need to shade his eyes now —

there is not too much light there — he looks up. Again he walks up and down the room — the silver clock upon the mantle is striking SEVEN. What can it mean? What can it mean? Why, he is delivered from his temptation, and he steps as if that temptation were lying like a worm in his path, and he crushing it under his feet. He does not now find the gas-light too clear and searching.

And that happened while the clock was striking SEVEN, and while little Alice prayed! I wonder if she asked a blessing for *him* in that prayer?

In the room above there was a faint but clear and steady light burning. The place looked full of shadows, except just about the table where the candle stood.

Here, also, was a youth, alone. He did not look like the man who walked up and down the brilliant drawing room below. His papers and books were before him, but he neither wrote nor read; and very often he sighed, and said a brief

word that sounded like "Alas!"—and if he really did not say the word, his face looked it.

He was contrasting his own situation with that of the man in the drawing-room,—for that man was very rich, and the student was very poor. The rich man had nothing to trouble him, and the poor man had—why, he thought he had as much as a thousand of the very heaviest burdens to bear. In the first place he was alone,—nobody cared for him; he might succeed, or he might fail in his attempts,—who cared whether the one thing happened or the other? He might write, and write—but if his book was never finished, who would think it was a great pity, and a great misfortune to the world? And if he did complete it, who would print it? Who would buy it if it happened to be printed? Where could *he* look for his readers?

If it was too light for the thoughts of the man who was thinking in the drawing room below,

it certainly was not too dark for the thoughts of the man who was thinking in that little closet of a room above!

He could not tell the hour, for he had no watch, and there was no clock in the room; but the student knew that it was very early in the evening. There were a great many hours yet before he could think of sleep—and so he sat and indulged still longer in his gloomy meditations.

But presently a church clock in the next street told the hour of SEVEN. The bell had a soft, mellow sound. The student loved the sound,—he always laid aside his pen and listened, when it was striking. But what great change was that coming so suddenly over the student? I wish you could have seen it—it was so curious. How his eyes flashed!—how the desponding face became bright with intelligence and cheerfulness! and the bent figure straightened itself before the table. The folded hands are unclasped,—one sweeps over the

white forehead and pushes away the mass of disordered hair, the other seizes the pen upon the table. The student has a great thought in his head !

He goes to work at it,—it opens before him like a box of jewels,—it brings such a multitude of other thoughts with it ! He begins to lay them rapidly upon the paper. What a rich treasure !—and they are all his own thoughts !

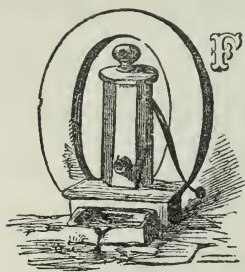
The candle burns down to the socket before he is aware ; the clock strikes twelve before he is done ; and yet he is not weary—and a happier man, why, I think you could not find a happier man than he in all Grand street on this night !

Now, if that fortunate thought, which so cheered the poor student that he went to bed thanking God who sent it to him, was the answer to the prayer of little Alice up in the attic when the clock struck SEVEN, that I cannot tell ; but it was certainly very strange that all these

good people should have been made so happy at that very moment, was it not? — and for my own part, I believe that the prayer of a child in the house is a great blessing.



The Town Pump.



Of course it did not stand in any man's kitchen, or cellar, or yard, for it was the TOWN PUMP, and its place was in the public street, near the sidewalk. What a grand situation!

Nothing could happen to the right or left, up or down the thoroughfare, without the knowledge of the Pump! It could not see the sun rise — and that, to be sure, was a great privation; but from ten o'clock till sunset, provided there were no clouds in the way, the Pump might gaze on the heavens, and behold the great light that lighteth the day. Taking all things into consideration, a more desirable situation, for one who was to serve the public, could not be imagined.

One moonlight night last summer, I was sitting at my window — the blinds were wide open, and a very refreshing breeze swept through

the house. It had rained in the afternoon : and you know how delightful it is in the evening after a summer shower — especially if the moon is shining.

I was in a very idle mood, and ready to think of anything, or nothing, just as the case might be. Not sleepy at all, though I had worked hard all day — so you must not say that what I am going to tell you about was only a dream. You may be perfectly sure that my eyes were wide open all the while, and that while I conversed with the Pump I knew what I was about.

Conversed with the Pump? Yes, though it is quite likely you never heard of such a thing before. I never did either.

And I suppose I should not have thought of doing such a thing, but for the little girl that came from a house over the way, with a tin pail in her hand ; and I could hear what she said very distinctly, it was so still in the street. She said,

“Old Pump ! I, for one, shall be very glad when I see the last you.”

Her words reminded me of what I had heard before, but I had forgotten it again, that to-morrow was the Pump’s birth day, and I said to myself,

“He must be wide awake if he’s like other folks. Nobody sleeps very soundly the night before his birth-day. And probably he is thinking of all that has happened to him, and to other people, in the course of his life. I’ll just ask him about it.” So I said,

“Town Pump !”

But there was no answer.

This annoyed me a little. It is n’t pleasant to address a person and get no answer ; and though the Town Pump was not a PERSON, still it was a THING — and in grammar a THING is called a noun as well as a PERSON — and is quite as respectable.

I reflected a moment. Perhaps if I came out with a question, I might be answered at once. May be, after all, the Pump was not ceremoni-

ous, and was vexed that I should be, and therefore would not take the trouble when I said "Town Pump," to say, "What do you want?"

So I exclaimed—

"You do nothing but think. You can see all that goes on, and understand why people do thus and so, because you have nothing to do but to look. You don't get mixed up with other folks—and confused, and distracted, and tired."

"Don't I?" a voice, harsh, but not disagreeable, exclaimed. That was all it said—but the words meant a great deal. I understood, just as well as if the voice had said it outright, that the Pump *did* get confused, distracted, and tired; and that I had only shown how little I knew about it, by saying that it did n't.

I was so glad to get an answer of any sort, that I cared not at all what shape it came in.

Perhaps now, thought I, if I tell the Pump the real state of my feelings, I shall get a little pity. So I groaned aloud,

"Oh. if I could only get away from this

place ! I'm so weary doing the same work day after day. I want to see new faces, and see new sights, and hear new voices, and do some other kind of work."

What do you think I heard in answer to my complaint? I was very indignant at first, you may be sure. To think—said I to myself, in my wrath—to think of an old Pump talking to me as if I were a beast!—for he said,

"WHERE WILT THOU GO, OX, THAT THOU WILT NOT HAVE TO PLOUGH?"

But after I had repeated these words to myself several times, I thought they had a familiar sound; and at length I remembered that it was an old Spanish Proverb, and I began to have a great degree of respect for the Pump,—what a learned Pump it was, to be sure! Then I said quite meekly, for my anger had altogether passed away, because I understood that the Pump meant to say that there is not a place on earth, and that God never made such a place, where a person might find rest who was not willing and

glad to labor in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him, I said quite meekly, I repeat,

“You are exceedingly wise, Mr. Pump — can you tell fortunes?”

“EVERY DAY IN THY LIFE IS A LEAF IN THY HISTORY,” he replied.

This was a proverb of the Arabs, I knew. I had heard it often enough; and when the Pump repeated it, I felt that it only was a polite way of saying to me — “You will know your fortune fast enough: be wise, and ask no questions — the best thing you can do is to live each day well.”

“I merely thought,” said I, “that as you had seen the fortune of so many people from beginning to end, and, that as I must be like unto some of them, for I don’t flatter myself that I’m unlike every other person, you might very likely be able to tell me *my* fortune. You must have a store of precious recollections, Mr. Pump.”

The Pump made no answer.

Could I not hit upon some way of compelling him to talk about what he had seen and heard? At least nothing was to be gained by silence on my part. If the Pump *was* a gossip he must be drawn out. Talk of his own accord he would not. So at last I said, boldly, —

“Pump! what do you think of the people of this village? You are about as old an inhabitant as we have.”

I waited for the answer; and I waited very patiently. I could understand that it was a question that required some thought before a proper reply could be made; but the Pump delayed so long, that I was about to inform him of my opinion in regard to his incivility, when the silence was broken, —

“IN PROSPERITY NO ALTAR SMOKES,” he said.

“THE RIVER PAST AND GOD FORGOTTEN,” he said.

“IT IS NOT WITH SAYING ‘HONEY, HONEY!’ THAT SWEETNESS WILL COME INTO THE MOUTH,” he also said.

“THE MILL OF GOD GRINDS LATE, BUT IT GRINDS TO POWDER,” he also said.

“They are wise old sayings — older than you and I together. See if you can tell what they mean,” said the Pump.

I knew what the Pump meant, and I said in my heart, “He is an old savage;” and aloud I said — “You think we are the wickedest people in the world. What should the people do with their riches? — dig a hole and bury them in the ground? Would that please you, Mr. Pump? Would you like it any better if they dressed in rags and went barefoot, and laughed at the proud?”

“THERE ARE THOSE WHO DESPISE PRIDE WITH A GREATER PRIDE,” said the Pump.

“That’s very true,” answered I. “Pride does n’t always show itself in beautiful carriages, and fine clothes, and grand dinners.”

I stopped here in the middle of my speech, for I heard the sound of many persons walking in the street. The noise was so unusual at that

time of night that I looked out, wondering what could be going on. To my great surprise I beheld a number of my friends, and some others whom I had never seen before, marching up the street. At first I thought I would call out to them, and ask what they meant by parading in that way by moonlight ; but on second thought, I felt it would be wiser to ask Mr. Pump for an explanation.

So I asked him, and the answer he made me was,

“Keep silence.”

He said it in a way that convinced me more would follow, and I was right.

The procession suddenly disappeared, even while I was looking at it. Then I heard a rippling, gurgling sound, like the flowing of a brook in April,—the heart of Mr. Pump was full to running over,—it was a beautiful sound. And then I saw a little beggar girl. She was standing beside Mr. Pump. She was clothed in rags, and they did not half cover her. Her feet were

bare, and one of them was bleeding, and she looked very tired. On her arm she carried an old basket,—it was half filled with crusts of bread some servant had given her from the MASTER's table. Well, this little one sat down at Pump's feet, and drank from the cup he gave her. You know what that cup was,—the great wooden trough from which every weary one—dog, horse, cow, or man—was as free to drink as could be.

As soon as she had eaten the crust, the little one was up and away again—singing as she went—and her voice was not sad, but merry and gay. She was a happy child; and before she was out of sight I heard Mr. Pump saying softly to himself, yet he meant me to hear him, I thought,

“GOD TEMPER THE WIND TO THE SHORN LAMB.”

Well—I knew of course that this was only the beginning of the wonder—and therefore I leaned back in my chair, and thought upon the little beggar girl, and remembered the beauti-

ful words of Scripture, that "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father: even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." And I could but think how weak we are to groan, and fret, and be troubled about many things, when He has promised never to leave or forsake us.

Presently up came two young lads, and these I will also describe for you. They were both poor,—that I knew by their dress,—but not so poor as the little girl who was a beggar; for their clothes were whole, though patched, and the boys were stout and strong, and they were able to earn their bread by their own labor.

—Which in fact they did; and they worked for the same master. But though they were both young—both poor—both industrious—there was a vast difference between them. And this was the difference: but no, I will not tell it to you—I will only make mention of the proverb which Mr. Pump said to them while he looked them in the face :

“The master of one trade will support a wife and seven children: the master of seven will not support himself.”

And this was what I noticed, as I watched the two boys while Mr. Pump said that: one of them looked very indignant, and grew red, and angrily walked away, while the other took off his cap, bowed very respectfully to the venerable speaker, and said, “That is a wise saying—thank you for it, Mr. P——.”

After he had gone away, I saw another youth. He was one I knew very well—a kind, good soul—and I loved him very much; but I was always afraid for him, because I knew that this is a hard world for all who are not willing to take their proper part, and do their proper work in it.

He came strolling up the street at the old gait, putting one foot before another in a way that made you think of a crab—for you could hardly tell if he meant to go forward or backward. It was the way he did everything,—as

if he were not more than half alive; as if he did not wish to do the thing he was attempting to do; as if he did not believe the words he was saying to you; and as if the world did not need him at all, nor he the world in the least. You should have seen him saunter up the street! When I saw him I wanted to cry out, "David, David! what *are* you living for?" but then I thought surely Mr. Pump will be good enough and wise enough to teach him a lesson he will never forget, and I waited to hear.

When he had nearly reached Mr. P —, he seemed to have no intention of stopping, but kept on his way, at that same old snail pace.* He was not to get by without a rebuke, however. Very likely David sighed as he approached the old inhabitant. He had a way of sighing, as if his fate were the hardest man ever bore. I could see him start when the Pump gave that groan which always preceded his remarks, and I could also see his look of wonder when the voice said,

“Who has a mouth, let him not say to another, ‘Blow!’”

David stopped short, — he looked up at the moon ; he looked around him on every side. I could see him blush even at that distance ; and then, this was what made me glad — he walked rapidly up the street, and Mr. Pump said, “That’s a good night’s work, he is waked up at last ; yes, and he won’t go to sleep again in a hurry. Mr. David will do a good day’s work yet — that’s certain.” I blessed the old Pump when I heard him say that.

After David came a woman. She also was walking very slow — her arms were folded on her breast, and her head bent. I could not see her face, but I could hear her crying, and could see that she wore heavy mourning garments.

I trembled when I saw her. I said—Her sorrow is more than she can bear. I leaned from the window, and looked upon her : if I only knew her sorrow, surely I, even I, could comfort her : this was my thought. I wondered if the

Pump would know what to say to her,—he seemed to know everything. I hoped in my heart it was no harsh thing that he would say.

His heart was more tender than mine. It not only was moved with pity for her, but he could find the proper word to say,

“No leaf moves but God wills it.”

That was what he said. And I wept when I heard it. But the woman who had been so distracted with her grief stood still when the voice sounded, as if the words came from heaven; and after a moment of dead silence, I heard her cry,

“Oh, my Father in Heaven, forgive me—the child was thine. It was thy mercy that took him from me! Forgive me, that I murmured.”

And when I looked again I saw her standing with her face uncovered, looking up into heaven, smiling, and what struck me as very surprising, instead of her mourning garments she wore a dress of white, and there were no tears in her eyes.

After this came by another woman, and she had an angry looking face. It would have been

beautiful but for the angry look. For she was very fair, and her eyes were bright, and her hair brown and curling. But what made me shudder was that she carried a serpent in her arms, and it rested upon her bosom like an infant. Behind her followed a younger woman, very pale, and she was lovely. She wept—and it was because of the words her companion said that she wept. This I understood at once, and I hoped in my heart that Mr. Pump would give the angry woman a good lesson: and he did. He was not the person to neglect so excellent an opportunity.

And I listened to hear what he should say—

“THE EVIL WHICH ISSUES FROM THY MOUTH FALLS INTO THY BOSOM,” said he.

How the angry woman started as she heard that! She looked down upon her folded arms,—she saw the serpent that was nestling in her bosom! Oh! what a shriek she gave; and her arms were outspread in the twinkling of an eye. Upon her knees she fell, and in her fall the ser-

pent was crushed to death. And also I heard her praying for forgiveness—of the woman by her side, as well as of heaven—and when she arose again I could see that now she was indeed very beautiful; and I observed, moreover, that the serpent that had lodged in her breast went floating down the stream of the fountain that overflowed from the heart of Mr. Pump. And when these had gone away I looked out again into the street, but all was still; not a soul was to be seen there.

Now, said I, Mr. P—— is well waked up—I will have a little conversation with him.

But while I sat thinking what I should say next, it suddenly began to rain violently in at the window; the thunder and lightning were terrible; and instead of holding any conversation with my friend, I closed the blinds and the window, and

left him to talk with the storm. And I have no doubt that they had a very animated conversation, but I did not hear it. I wish I had.



The Fragrant Artificial.



FRAGRANT artificials!" exclaimed Julia, laughing, and looking Rose in the face, as if she did not believe one word of it.

"Just wait, if you please, till you hear more about it," said Rose. "Were you ever in the shop on the corner of the street?"

"The one that looks so like a garden with all those paper flowers in bouquets? — mercy, yes! a hundred times."

"I suppose you stop before the windows whenever you are going that way?"

"Yes; every single time. I was never in such a hurry that I could n't take time for that."

"I wonder if you ever think of the difference between these flowers, and those that grow in the gardens, and fields, and green-houses."

"Of course I do," said Julia.

“Then you can tell me the difference,— what is it?”

“That’s a curious question. What makes you ask me? Do you really think I don’t know the difference?”

“Tell me what it is : it is only a civil question.”

“But it’s so odd,” said Julia ; “ but I’ll answer it. Flowers that *grow* have roots, and you can see them opening—the flowers I mean. Paper flowers don’t have roots. Besides, they are not sweet, they have no fragrance.”

“Just prove that,” said Rose.

Julia said nothing, but went to the table and brought to her friend a large bunch of paper flowers, and held them up to her nose.

“There! what do you think now? *Is* there any fragrance?”

“Yes,” said Rose ; “they are sweeter than heliotrope and mignonnette.”

“I should like to borrow your nose,” said Julia, laughing ; “but, Auntie, what do you mean?”

“Sit down, and don’t interrupt me. This is what I mean. Yesterday I went down to the little shop on the corner. I had some business with the woman who owns the shop. On the counter were several large bouquets, which a young girl had just left there. As I went into the place she was coming out, and I could not help noticing her, she was so good looking. And by good looking I don’t mean her face was very pretty, but it was modest, and quiet; and I could easily imagine what sort of voice she had—that it was a mild, pleasant, cheerful voice.

“I imagined that she was the girl who had left the flowers there, and I asked the woman if it was not so.

“‘Yes,’ she replied; ‘and she not only left them — she also made them.’

“This surprised me, the girl looked so young; and I said to the woman, ‘I had supposed that such work was done by older persons.’

“The woman was silent for a moment, then

she turned away and arranged the new bunches of flowers in places made vacant by recent sales; after this she went into the back part of the shop and called 'TIM;' at the same time she put on her bonnet and came up to me.

" 'Will you go with me?' she asked.

" 'Where, and why?' I said.

" 'I want you should see Kate at her work,—I want you should know how some things are done.'

" 'Is Kate the girl that makes the flowers?' I asked.

" 'Yes,' she answered.

" 'Oh, well — thank you; I am very glad to go with you,'—and I was indeed very glad.

" 'We went out into the street together, and walked a long way until we came to a narrow lane. Passing through it we at length came to a little court yard. This the woman entered, and I followed after her. Oh, Judy, you were never in such a dirty, old, tumble-down place as that! Such a wretched, wretched home! — why,

your own little home is a palace compared to it. Some poor children were playing in the court yard. What do you think they had for toys? — an old boot, and a rag of a slipper, a piece of a broken dish, some clam shells, and bits of bottles, and an old tin pail that was so battered and jammed that it was difficult to believe it had ever had a shape.

“ One little fellow in the corner had hurt his hand with the broken glass, and it bled — so of course he cried at the top of his voice, — while a girl not as old or as large as he, was trying to comfort him, holding up the toys they had gathered together one after another before his eyes. But the smarting cut was not to be healed in that way. I stopped for a moment, wondering what I should do to help him; for as he held up his hand, the blood ran from it in a stream. While I was thinking about it, another of the children came up, and without an instant’s hesitation tore a strip of cloth from the rag of a dress she wore, and tied it around the finger.

“The woman cried to me from the stairs, which she had begun to ascend, “Will you not come?”

“I followed quickly after her. Up, up, we went, until at last, after I had thought a dozen times as we walked one flight after another, ‘Now, surely, the woman will stop here!’ I cried out,

“‘Pray, tell me, is this Jacob’s ladder — and if it is, where can it lead one? — not into heaven, I’m sure! Besides, you said you would take me into a garden. Pray, what sort of a garden is this? — it must be a hanging garden, I think, like those they had in old times.’

“‘You’ll know all about it when you get there, and that will be immediately, if you will only come on,’ said the woman, who was far beyond me; and I could hear her still going on, step after step.

“‘Come! come on! — we are nearly there;’ and so we went on and on.

“Presently I heard her stop and rap, and I

hurried on the faster. We had actually reached the last half story. The house was five and a half stories high, and we were in the garret; and for a person who dislikes stair-climbing as I do, this was something of a task I had performed. But now we were at last at the gate of the garden, where that young Kate gathered all her beautiful flowers.

“‘It is only I, Kate,’ said my guide — and she tapped lightly again.

“At the same instant the door opened, and Kate stood there before us; so we went into the garden.

“I wonder — but no, I don’t wonder, for I *know* you never, never saw, or imagined, a place like that. What sort of a sunshine do you suppose those flowers had for growing in?

Judy was sure she did n’t know.

“They grew in the sunshine of that girl’s smile,” said Rose. “Must she not have been exceedingly happy?”

Yes — Judy thought she must be exceedingly happy — of course.

“But what was there to make her so happy?”

Oh, of course, Judy couldn’t tell that. How should she know?

“*I* know,” said Rose, “and I mean to tell you; but first do you tell me, when Mary anointed our dear Saviour’s feet with the precious ointment, why was he pleased with the gift, and how came she, who was poor, to make so costly a gift?” Judy was silent.

“Don’t you know? Can it be that you don’t know?” asked Rose.

“She loved much,” said Judy.

“Yes, and there was never a gift worth much if the giver could not, and did not, love much. This may seem strange, but it won’t seem so to you when you come to think about it. Now, as to Kate, what made her so happy was this,—she loved so much, her heart was so generous and kind. If it were really true, Judy, as some people seem to think—that to be happy one

must needs have a very fine house to live in, and very fine furniture about that house, grand clothes to wear, and rich food to eat, and nothing in all the world to do but walk about and *enjoy life*, as they call it — why, then this Kate had a very poor chance at happiness. She must certainly be very miserable. It was such a poor place that she lived in. Nothing but a garret,—no carpet on the floor; no paper on the wall; no pleasant books to read; no comfortable furniture to use; no delicious food to eat; no pleasant prospect from the windows,—indeed, the little window was so high that even when Kate stood upon a chair, she could hardly look through it!

“And then, as to agreeable companions—there they were in the room with her—the poor old father, who was wounded by an accident, so that he has not been able to do any work at all this winter, and little George, her half-brother, whose mother as well as Kate’s mother, is dead. Poor child! but he has fallen into good hands,

Judy. Kate loves him dearly, and she calls him her 'baby boy.' So what do you think of this garden where the flowers grow? Are not the artificials fragrant?"

Judy looked down, and she smiled, but there were tears in her eyes. Presently she said, hiding her face in her hands,

"Oh, Aunt Rose! I was in such a pet because I could n't have that splendid doll."

"But are not the artificials fragrant?" said Aunt Rose again.

"Yes."

"And what makes them fragrant, Judy?"

"The love of the maker, Aunty."

"Yes," said Rose, quite solemnly, while she laid her hand gently on Judy's head. "And I shall leave these flowers in a place where we can often look at them,—because, when we do look at them, I think we shall remember little Kate, and how industrious, and contented, and happy, and loving, she is. I think that as long as they are here in sight, and we can understand how fra-

grant they are, that we shall be apt to exert ourselves more that we may make those about us comfortable and happy. I think when we look upon them we shall thank God for all his blessings, and try in every way to make ourselves more worthy of them. And I think, besides, that when we see them here before us day after day, we shall never be led into temptation, into which snare we have sometimes fallen, I fear — I mean the temptation to look with silly pride on the poor. For sometimes we think ourselves above them, when in reality they may be far better than we, though their garments be poor, and their homes very humble. Judy, you will not forget?”

“But was there really no other nurse for the sick man — and no other mamma for the little ‘baby boy’ but this poor Kate? Are you sure, Aunt Rose?”

“As sure as can be. She has her hands full — that’s true; but don’t call Kate ‘poor.’ Her heart is a great treasure, I tell you. As long as

she has that, she is rich. Don't look so surprised; it is not gold, it is not silver that makes a person rich,—it is the good, brave, loving heart.”

“I believe it, because you say so, Aunty; but it's very strange.”

“Some day,” said Rose, “you'll believe it, because you will see with your own eyes that it is true. You won't say then ‘It's very strange.’ You will thank God that he has ordered it to be so with his children.”



The Bell Ringers.

I.



HE was standing, quiet as a statue — little Deb;— but how red and heated she was! looking at something before her. It was lying on the table, and not for an instant did she take her eyes off it.

Not long ago you might have seen her racing through the garden, on into the orchard, back by the lane, and then on again through the garden. She was in pursuit of a large butterfly. Did she get it? Look! you see, she has the poor captive pinned through the body to the table, and little Deb has placed a glass bowl over it, so that it may not escape. And now she is watching all its movements, and counting the rings on its wings. Every time those wings are opened wide, the poor fly has a sort of spasm; but Deb

don't think of that — she only says, “ Oh ! that's fine — now I can see nicely ! ” Little she cares for the pain of the butterfly ; all she wants is a good sight at the slender body and the beautiful wings.

Such a splendid butterfly ! — the wings are like velvet, and of the most lovely brown ; and the rings upon them are red and black ; and the eyes of the fly are like great beads. It is just what Deborah has been longing for this long time,—so she brings her paint box, and brushes, and card paper, and now she will have a butterfly, all of her own making.

So she works away with the paints and the brush, and it never enters her head all this time to think that the poor insect is in great misery.

Deb never thinks of anything except herself. She may forget to do her duty, but she never forgets to do whatever she desires to do, no matter whether it is right or wrong. The question she asks herself when there is any work before her is this—“ Will it be pleasant? — will it

amuse me?" and if she can answer her own questions with a *Yes*, then she is always ready enough to do it. Do you know any such girl? Is her name Deb? No! What is the name, then?

The picture is only half finished — then her brother comes.

"Deborah! I'm going to the pond to fish — come with me — hurry!"

Away go the pencil, and brush, and paints! It is the greatest fun to fish! — so much pleasanter than painting butterflies. That's what Deb thinks to herself; and she forgets all about the butterfly under the glass bowl, with the pin through it.

At night they come in, tired and hungry. They have had a grand time at the fishing pond; but all Deborah wants now is her tea, and then for bed. Yes, she has forgotten all about the poor captive butterfly. Nothing is truer than that!

In the morning, however, it is the first thought that enters her head; and so impatient is Deb-

orah, that before she is half dressed she goes flying down the back stairs into the play-house. But behold! the poor creature is DEAD! And what do you think the child does next? Tears up the picture she was making, and throws it away. Then she pins the fly to the wall, and there it hangs, and she cares no more about it, though she has killed the beautiful creature that took such delight flying about in the sunshine, and sipping the honey from the cups of flowers!

This is the child who, now that she is an old woman, sits by her window and pulls the wire. *I don't know how many yards long it is. To this wire a bell is attached, and when it is rung the birds are frightened away from the fruit trees in the orchard. Yes, she can find time to do this, but if a poor beggar comes along, and begins to tell her of his sad fortune, she says, "Go on! I've no time to hear"—and then she rings the bell violently. It seems almost a wonder that the sun will ripen the fruit in that old woman's orchard.*

II.

It is old Peter; he is nearly a hundred years old, but he rings the bill through the streets when there is to be an auction — just as he used to do fifty years ago.

He is beginning to show his age,—he stoops a great deal, and when he takes a step he seems to make a sort of pause after it, as if he were not quite certain that he could take another. His hair is getting very gray, and his face, how many wrinkles there are in it! — how deep they are! He does not speak as plainly as once; his voice falters, and his teeth are nearly all gone. He was very stout and strong once; he could carry a barrel of flour from a wagon in the street to a cellar near by. I have seen him do it; but he could no more do that now than he could carry off a city full of buildings on his shoulders. He is so thin that he looks almost like a skeleton. I know he feels the weight of

the bell which he carries in his hand, as he goes crying "Auction, auction!" through the street, to be very heavy.

Peter was a slave once; but when he was of age his master gave him his liberty. For this reason, Peter, at the risk of his own life, saved the life of little Edwin Collins—and Edwin was his master's only son. But though he was set at liberty, and was a free man, and might go anywhere he chose, and do as other free men do, Peter remained with his old master as long as the man lived. It was not till after his death that the black man came up to us, and became our auction bell-ringer.

He has no wife and no children—they are all dead long ago; but the old man is not alone. One night last winter Peter was awakened by a loud cry,—there was some one at his door. He arose and looked out; it was a child, half frozen, and half starved—a poor little lost creature, that could not tell where he came from; and no one has ever been able to discover.

The old man took the little stranger in. He fed him from his table, and warmed him by his fire, and laid him in his own warm bed. And the child lives with him now. He is like a white lily in Peter's home ;—very soon he will be able to go ringing the bell for the old man, and Peter is teaching him, that he may do so. But he has taught us our lesson already,—a noble one it is ; and whenever I hear any one say, “If I were rich, it would be such a pleasure for me to help the poor,” I think of poor “old Peter,” and say to myself, “After all, one need not wait till he is so very rich before he can help others, if he did but know it !”

III.

Tinkle ! tinkle ! tinkle !

It is the pet lamb whose fleece is white as snow. It has a silver chain around its neck, and that is the silver bell that tinkles so softly.

Last summer they had a great fright—the chil

dren who live up there in the mountain house !
The pet lamb was lost.

Ella had wandered off with it into the woods. She had gathered many flowers by the way, and of these she intended to make a wreath for the lamb's neck. But it happened that before she half got through her work the child fell asleep, and the lamb, instead of lying down beside her, strayed away, and when Ella awakened it was nowhere to be seen ! All that afternoon she wandered up and down the woods, crying, "Loo ! Loo !" all along the brookside, down into the valley, and up the hill-side ; now creeping on her hands and knees among the bushes, tearing her clothes, and tangling her hair with them, calling "Loo ! Loo !" until it became so dark in the woods that she began to fear that she herself would get lost. So she went back by another path than that through which she had come, tired and heated by her long search, and grieving over the lost lamb as if her heart would break.

What would become of poor Loo? — alas! if she should fall down those steep, rocky places, and break her leg, or her neck! — if any wild beast should devour her! or if she should wound herself among the thorn bushes, or put her eyes out! — or, more than all, if they should never find poor Loo, either dead or alive again!

Already the father and mother were greatly alarmed, when it became so dark and Ella came not home. They started out in search of their child, but she met them just as they were about to enter the forest. She looked like a wild girl, and her father said — “Ella must have seen a goblin. Did you dance with the goblins, Ella?”

All she could answer was, “Loo, Loo!” and she ran into her mother’s arms, and wept there.

It did not take them long to understand what had happened; and then the father said —

“You shall have Loo to-morrow, children. I’ll turn the woods inside out, but you shall have her.”

They believed what he told them — for what-

ever he said should happen did always come to pass ; so that the children had learned to look upon their father as a sort of good genius. They therefore slept quietly and peacefully all night. But before she slept, when Ella said her prayers, she prayed to God that he would deliver the pet lamb from all evil.

The next day the whole family went off into the forest on the search for Loo. Up and down they went, through all the paths, and where there were no paths, until they all looked as if they might have danced with goblins, but no Loo was to be found. To himself the father said, "Poor little thing—it must indeed be lost ;" but whenever he met one of his children he cried, "Courage ! we shall certainly have her soon !—and then we will let her know that it is n't well behaved in a lamb, though she *is* a pet lamb, and Loo in the bargain, to be turning a family topsy-turvy in this way. I should n't wonder if she got a good lesson."

But then the children, full of sorrow and pity,

would say, "Oh father, don't; for she has had as great a fright as we have. Only think of her being out here all alone through the night!"

And to herself the mother would say, "The dear children,—this is their first sorrow. I wish it might be spared them; but it's my belief that we shall none of us ever see Loo again."

But all at once there was a cry heard in the forest, and they all ran off in the direction from which the cry seemed to come. There sat Ella on the ground, and a little dead lamb was lying in her arms, and she was crying aloud, and saying, "Oh, my darling is dead?—Loo is dead—dead!"

And they gathered around her, and the mother wept silently; for deep in her heart she felt for the sorrow of her child. But the father knelt down and turned the face of the lamb towards him, and he said—"Yes, it is even so—the lamb is dead;"—but he smiled when he said it. Ella saw his smile, and an angry thought

came into her heart ; she drew the lamb back into her arms, and bowed her head over it.

Thus they all stood for a moment, when,
Tinkle ! tinkle ! tinkle !

They all heard it.

And behold, through the forest they saw a little white object running along — and it came towards them. It was not afraid — it came close up to Ella, and rubbed its nose upon her arm. Instantly she leaped up, and the dead lamb rolled over upon the ground, and it was forgotten.

“ Why, *this* is Loo ! ” she cried.

“ Nonsense ! ” said Fritz. “ Where should Loo get a silver chain for her neck, and a silver bell ? — just look at that.”

“ And besides,” said Frank, “ see the flowers, — who would dress Loo out in that style ? ”

“ I,” said Ella.

“ Yes — you would if you could, very likely — but *could* you ? ”

“ Yes,” said Ella.

"But, child," said Fritz, "don't you see the chain and bell?"

"Yes, to be sure."

"Where did they come from?"

"That I don't know, Fritz, any more than you; but it's Loo as sure as you live — only look her in the face!"

"Father, what is it?" said Fritz.

"Loo," replied the old man, solemnly.

"It's her ghost," said Frank, laughing.

But what the mother did was this, — she knelt down and put her arms around the lamb's neck, and kissed it.

And after that they all did the same.

Then they made a grave there in the wood, and in it they laid the dead lamb; and they carried back the snow white lamb, that had the silver bell fastened to it, neck, to their own house, and softly the mother said in her heart,

"It was dead, and is alive again — it was lost and is found."

IV.

What a sharp, angry sound! — there's not the least music in it! I looked out from my window — it was the milk-man that was driving his fine Arabian horse slowly along, and at every step the bell that was attached to him gave that ugly clang! clang!

The milk-man is proud of the steed; and no wonder, it is such a glorious beast. Look what a gloss there is on his neck, and back, and sides — and then his mane and tail, how fine! The horse is proud of himself. How do I know that? — why, he says as much every step he takes. How high he carries his head! — and his feet touch the ground as if he thought it were not quite good enough for them.

He has served his master one or two not very pleasant tricks. I saw him myself one day running away with the cart, and the milk was all spilt when the cart was overturned at last. But

for all that the man loves the horse,—yes, I mean *loves* him—likes is not the word. He loves the beast, and would not sell him for a fortune.

But as to Lightning—that is his name,—I cannot say as much for him. I think that if he loves anything, it is the great sandy desert of Arabia, and the wild man who every night led the steed into his own tent, and made a bed for him just as if Lightning were a human creature, like himself. I am sure he has no great affection for the cart he drags around after him; and as for the bell that goes clang! clang! whenever he steps, I am quite sure he hates it.

Because the bell keeps saying to him, “Trot along! ding, dong! trot along!” and the horse feels that as keenly as he would the milk-man’s whip—to think of the bell’s presuming to say such things to him!

They have made a beast of burden of him. Yes, he feels all that; and I can read it in his eyes. He is too proud to make any answer to

the bell,—he says to himself, “I have fallen very low. Once I went where I would, and was as free as the wind. I flew over the sands as fleet as a bird moves through the air. Now, in this cold, dreary region, I drag my burden after me, walking up and down the street, and the bell never stops its talk. But let it get an answer if it can. I should like to have the bell get an answer from me ! And these beasts that fill the street — they are thinking too, I dare say, that we are all brothers ; but *my* brothers are all in the desert ! Alas, I am a slave, and they do not know it.”

And when I have read all this, and more, in the eyes of the beautiful steed, I have seen him lift high his head, and a loud, shill cry would break from him, a hundred times louder than the voice of the bell. And I always knew that this was the voice of his grief, and rage and pride. I believe his pride will be the death of the poor Arabian, some day.

V.

It is a careless hand drawing the rope that swings the bell up in the belfry of the old stone Court House. Sam is paid for the trouble: he has a hundred other things to do to-day: it is now only nine o'clock, and already he has been at work five hours, and he will work more than a dozen more before he is through and can sleep again.

As he pulls the rope he thinks of the hundred things to do, and looks at his watch,—there! his work up here is over,—it is five minutes since he began to ring, and he clambers down the belfry stairs, and hurries away. The Judge solemnly goes in and takes his place, while the people crowd into the court room, and the prisoner, guarded by the constables, comes to be tried for murder! When the Judge heard the bell he looked troubled — when the people heard it they ran hurriedly to the court room — when the prisoner heard it he turned pale and trembled, and said, “God help me!”

But the bell-ringer went his way whistling, to gather vegetables for the great court dinner at the hotel that day.

VI.

The old man Simeon, stands up in the belfry of the church—they call the church St. John's—he leans against the green blinds of the tower, and as he rings the great bell, (it has the sweetest tone you ever heard!) he looks down into the street, and watches the people come in.

He is dressed in his best. You would not mistake him for a very fine gentleman, but he looks well in the pastor's half-worn black coat, and the new black vest and neck-cloth his daughter Susan bought for him on his last birthday. His heart is in his eyes as he looks down through the blind into the street below. He does not show much interest while the fine carriages are driven up, and the rich people alight, and, arrayed in all their splendor, walk into the

holy place. He does not think it strange that they come so proudly in their state to worship the Son of Mary — the meek and lowly man who was born in a manger — who lived among fishermen, and feasted with publicans and sinners. He does not think it odd, though I dare say he would if he thought about it at all. No — he is not looking at these ; nor even at the children of the Sunday school, as they come up the walk together, until he sees his own dear child among them, and then a soft smile spreads over his old face. For dearly he loves little Prue. But look now — how the smile deepens !

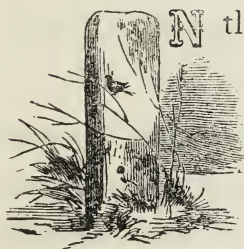
A little group is passing through the gate ; — does not the bell give out a sweeter sound than bell ever did before ?

It is an aged woman, leaning on a younger woman's arm, and a young man carrying in his arms a little white figure — ah, well the old man understands all that ! It is his grand-child's christening day ; and Joseph and Susan have given at home, and will give before all the people

this morning, old Simeon's name to the little one. If the bell was tolled less solemnly than usual this day—if the old sexton left the belfry before half the grand people had started for the church—you understand what it all meant. His old wife knew very well when he came down and took his place beside her in their pew, next the great door of the church; and peering at him through her spectacles, she says, "He looks as handsome as he did the day I married him." A stupid person might say that love had made her blind. But I think she had a pair of first-rate eyes in her head.



The Robin in the Swamp.



In the first place let me tell you — for of yourself you would never find it out — at one end of the village is a swamp. I say you would not find it out of yourself, because the bushes of the swamp have grown so tall that they look almost like trees ; and there *are* also some trees — not many, but these are of large size, scattered over the place.

The bushes are “huckle-berry,” and in summer time, when they are covered with ripe fruit, the swamp is visited by a great many people, who gather the berries and sell them.

A narrow road runs along on the border of the swamp ; — it was never much traveled. As to Clara, she had never been that way either on foot, or in sleigh, or in carriage.

Clara was now ten years old, and it was late

in the winter. She sat by the window, wishing. This was a great shame, yet she would not have believed it if you had told her so. For she did not know herself. What hard work it is for a person to become really acquainted with himself!

Yesterday there was but one thing in the wide world wanting to make her happy. If the birds would only come back! True, it was too early for them to begin to build their nests—but if they would only come, though they made but a day's visit in the village, what a comfort it would be! There were the pigeons,—but one could see them at any time. There were her pets in the cage,—but these were not what she wanted. It was to see the free, out-door birds—to harken while they filled the air with the melody of their songs—to watch them as they flew from branch to branch of the great elm tree, and the maple tree beside it. The day before yesterday she had wished this wish aloud many times. It was a warm, bright day, and her mother had

said it was her belief that they should have no more snow that season. And lo, that very night snow fell nearly a foot deep!

Oh, what a world — what a world! Clara said; nothing ever happened as it should! As to the birds, there was no use of looking for them any longer — of course they never would come — not even the robins, — no, not even the robins! And why should they come? she asked. What was there to tempt them up into that dreary, frozen region? If birds really had any wisdom they would stay where they were, in the warm, sunny, delightful south, and not risk their lives and voices by coming up into that desolate country, where there certainly was as little comfort and enjoyment to be had, as one could expect to find at the north pole!

All this complaint Clara made aloud — but she little thought that one was near who heard it all. She said it aloud; but that she would never have done, had she not believed she was alone.

In the afternoon Clara had quite forgotten about yesterday's wish, and this morning's wish. She was standing at the parlor window, looking out. While she stood there a lady went by. Oh, she was splendid! with her gay pink bonnet, and furs, and the beautiful, beautiful velvet dress! Ah, why could not *she* be a woman at once, without all the tedious delay? Why must people ever be so helpless, and little, as Oliver in the nursery, who could not speak a single word? Why must they go through all that tiresome work of study at school, and at home, and grow up so slowly?

Oh, what a world! what a world!

And when the lady half stopped in the street just before the house, Clara saw her look at her watch; and then she looked up at the window where the little girl stood; and would you ever believe it? — tears actually started into Clara's eyes! Oh, if papa would only give *her* such a watch! And then, when she looked down and saw how plainly she herself was dressed, Clara

was horror struck. Quickly she pulled the curtain before her. Could it be that the lady had seen the old red frock and the plain linen apron? Oh, misery!

After that Clara went and sat down by the fire-place, and what do you suppose she wished for then? Why, that she were only old enough to have a house of her own, to be rich, to be married, and to have beautiful gay clothes! Ah! she would never wear a plain linen apron and an old red frock in those days—that was very certain. She would have a velvet dress, and a gay hat, and splendid furs! Yes, certainly—and a thousand other things.

And so she thought, and thought, until suddenly there came a sound of sleigh bells, so near that Clara was quite startled. Again she ran to the window. There sat her father, and the instant he saw her he beckoned her to come out and ride with him. In two minutes more she was sitting beside him in the sleigh. Crack! and away they went.

It had stopped snowing. How pure and white the great drifts lay by the side of the road where the wind piled them last night,—how blue the sky was, and how clear the air! It whiffed away all the idle things Clara had been dreaming by the fireside.

It was up by the swamp that they went. That was a lonely road,—why should they go off in that direction where there was nothing to be seen? Why could they not go where the people were, down through the street? If the road were well broken she would not care, but only one sleigh had been that way since the last snow fell. What could it mean that her father chose this ugly road?

As they came to the dark bushy wood, Clara began to complain aloud, and to say, “What did make you choose this road, father?”

He did not answer her at first—nor did he seem to hear her,—for his eyes were turned away from her, and wandering in the direction of the gloomy swamp. At length he said,

“Open your eyes wide, Clara; now what do you see?”

Very wide she opened her eyes.

“Why, father, is that a robin, here in the midst of all this snow?”

“What do you think about it?” asked he.

“It looks like one,” she answered, and her face began to look as if she were recalling slowly all she had said yesterday—such foolish, wicked stuff.

“And what does that look like, Clara?” he asked, raising his whip and cracking it toward the swamp; and as he did so a great multitude of birds started off on the wing for the wood. “That is what you wished for yesterday;—see, what a host of birds, all robins, too! And all living through the whole winter, not half a mile from your own home! I wonder if you have been wishing for anything to-day, my child?”

Clara did not answer—she hid her face instead. If there were any tears in her eyes now, you may rely upon it, they were not such

tears as she shed in the morning, when she wished she were only a woman — nor such as she shed yesterday, when she was wishing that the birds would only come. I think that sleigh-ride did her good. If it did not, more's the pity!

The Garden.



THE place was like a garden, though no one thought to call it so, except a poet. The month was June, and all the white rose trees were in blossom. The grass had been newly cut; and never were the alanthus and willow trees more beautiful than now—for the summer dust had not yet lodged upon and soiled their fresh green leaves. In a cornor of a grave-yard—it was a grave-yard, though the poet called it a garden—was a flower-bed. That was what it looked like, though in reality the mound was a grave, and the pinks, and violets, and moss, and verbena, and heliotrope, which grew upon the mound, were planted there by sorrowful hearts, and tears were shed there like the dew.

This place was separated from the rest of the

burial-ground by a hedge of cedar and hemlock bushes. Except this hedge, all the plants had been placed here recently. A month ago no mound was to be seen in this portion of the burial-ground; and the plants flowering upon the grave were in another sort of garden; and she who was buried there had walked about in that garden, and watched the flowers unfolding. Much she loved them.

Now she is dead — and this young girl that comes over the style, and walks along so quietly, as if she were half afraid, has come to the place where the lady, who was her mother, is buried. Her hands are full of flowers, and these she places on the grave. See! it looks like a great bouquet lying there upon the ground. And she sits down — the little, motherless girl! — and leans her head upon her hand. She has come to think of the dead.

It is so lonely now at home — she has wished many, many times, that she might also creep into that grave, and lie down beside her mother,

as she used to do. If she might only hear that dear friend saying *once* more, “My darling child!”

At home, up in the village, her brothers play as noisily and gaily as ever,—no one would suppose that they had met with a great loss,—and Sally works away after the same old fashion, and papa attends to his books and business. No one seems to think that the home is less comfortable, less pleasant, less cheerful than it was a month ago. They all bear the loss very well. There is something to comfort and occupy them all except poor Jane;—she can do nothing but think of her mother, and then she gathers the flowers and carries them off to the burial-ground. The gardener says nothing, but he has looked rather cross of late, as if, did he not feel so sorry for her, he would say that she was spoiling the garden with gathering so many bouquets.

Last Sunday the father came here with his children — and much he talked with them about

their mother; and he charged them to never forget her, but always to think of her as alive, because she really was alive, though she had gone to another country, and they would never see her anywhere on earth again. Very tenderly the father spoke, and all the while he held little Jane by the hand, and the boys stood by the grave and wept.

But when they left the grave-yard they seemed to forget where they had been, and what they had seen, for they laughed and talked—the boys did—all the way home about what they would do with themselves and Nep (Nep was their dog,) to-morrow. And the father, too, had forgotten, Jane said to herself, for he began to talk about her studies, and to say that he thought she must begin to go to school again.

Jane went directly into her room when she reached home. There she sat down to think upon her mother—to recall her loving words, and tender acts of kindness—“But,” she said, while she wept bitterly at the thought, “none

of them care; before the year is out they will forget all about her. I loved her best of all; and I am the only one that really cares about it." And there was pride as well as grief in Jane's tears,—you may know that by her reflections.

And this pride, alas! only grew stronger and stronger—not less and less—the more Jane thought upon her own grief, and compared it with that her father and the boys felt, on account of the death of her mother.

You will say this was a strange sort of pride. I think so too; yet it was what Jane really felt. But you will recollect that pride is like a chameleon—it presents itself in every imaginable hue. As long as the heart is not freed from it—as long as it remains like a prisoner there—it will be forever showing itself, and making itself heard. If it speaks, it speaks evil; if it is silent, the silence is not good. Unhappy heart, so long as pride remains in it! Unhappy heart! for it is said that God holds the proud afar off; and

we all know that they alone are happy to whom God is near.

Jane resolved that she would never go into the burial-ground again, either with her brothers or her father,—she would go there alone—and think in silence, and deck the grave by herself.

There came a day, however, when she was not allowed to remain alone. Not that any of her own house came down to weep, and to think with her; but another child—a little girl—was passing by that way, and seeing the beautiful flowers on the grave, she climbed over the style, and went along the garden paths, until she came to the place where Jane was.

How unlike they were—two children, and both girls, yet so unlike! The little stranger was poor. How do I know?—her dress showed it,—and she was a foreigner besides—an Irish girl. Her eyes told a good story of her. They said that she had a kind and gentle heart, as they looked from the grave to Jane, and from Jane

to the grave, so quietly, so sadly — as much as to say, “I am very sorry for you.”

Her eyes were blue, and her voice was gentle. These things made me think of the angels; yet I dare say not many people thought the Irish girl angelic! — but she made me think of them — for the skies are blue, and we know that the angels are beyond there. We cannot see them — those angels — but we know they are there.

“Who is buried here?” asked the stranger.

Jane looked up quickly when she heard the voice. Until then she had supposed that she was alone.

The first thing she thought was —

“What a fright! What business has this emigrant girl to be speaking to me? She may wait for an answer till she gets it.”

So Jane turned away and said nothing. She kept a proud silence. She thought the girl would go away; but after a while, seeing that she did not go, Jane looked at her again, as much as to say, “What are you staying for?”

But the girl's eyes were fixed upon the grave, and so strange was the expression of her face, that Jane could not help saying,

“What are you thinking of?”

“My mother,” answered the stranger.

“What of her?” said Jane — and this question was asked in a very different way from the other.

“I wish I might lay flowers on her grave.”

“Is she dead?”

“Yes — she is dead.”

“And where is her grave, then?”

“In the ocean.”

“The ocean!” exclaimed Jane. “What! in the Atlantic Ocean?”

“Yes — and she was buried in a storm.”

“Oh, how could you!”

“The mate and the sailors did it,—she had the fever.”

“What did you do then?—your father was with you?”

“He died first.”

“Then your brother — *he* was with you?”

“I was alone. I have no brother and sister. There were only us three.”

“Oh! I should have thought you would have died too,” cried Jane.

“I could n’t. I would if I could. Who did you say is buried here?”

“My mother,” answered Jane, quickly — ashamed to think of what had kept her from replying when the girl asked it before.

“There is only one grave. Then you have all the rest alive.”

“Yes — there is papa, and Willie, and Gideon, at home. And papa says that our mother is not dead — that she has gone to another country, and we shall see her again.”

“Yes — I know, if we act right,” said the girl. “It’s in heaven they are — your mamma and mine. It’s good to be there.”

“Would n’t you be afraid —” Jane began to say, but she stopped before she had fairly asked the question.

“To die? — afraid to die, do you mean? No, I’m more afraid to live: for — who knows? — I may be tempted, and do some evil thing, on account of which I shall never get into heaven. That is what I pray for — to be kept from temptation. Do you?”

“Yes,” answered Jane. But she had never in her life prayed so heartily and earnestly as she was doing at that moment.

And I think that as she walked out from that garden, hand in hand with the emigrant girl, and told her to come there whenever she would like to, and to think about her mother who was buried in the ocean, there — I think that it may be the two mothers, who loved our dear Lord on earth, looked down and smiled a blessing on their children, who were praying in their hearts at that moment to the Saviour.

I think, besides, that the proud thought which Jane had thought, as if she were the only mourner in her father’s house, was rooted from her heart when she went home that day.

It was noon, and very warm, and Gideon was lying in the hall upon the lounge, asleep, as Jane went in at the front door. She stood a moment looking at him. He was talking in his sleep — tears were streaming from his eyelids, and what he said in his sleep was this — “Oh mother! mother! do not go — do not leave me alone;” and he sobbed heavily.

He said this — and all the while Jane had been accusing him in her heart, and saying to herself that they had all forgotten that dear mother except herself!

Then later in the day, when she stood on the piazza, the silence all at once was broken. She heard a low voice, and at first she could not tell where it was; but as she listened it grew louder and more distinct — it was her father praying; and these were the words that fell upon her ear — “Help me, oh God! Thou hast taken away the friend of my heart, the companion of my life, the mother of my children! — help me that all my duty towards those children may be

done ; that at last in heaven we may be united to her who has gone before us." And many other words of the prayer she heard. He asked that his sorrow might not make him selfish, proud, hard-hearted — and he was weeping while he prayed. "This was her father ! and Jane had said to herself that none remembered or wept for the loss of her mother—none but herself ! Oh, poor child ! little she knew what had been in the hearts of the rest of the household. But she knew it all now. And in her grief for her lost mother, she never shed bitterer tears than she shed now, when she reflected on the pride and selfishness of her own sorrow.



The Trumpet Flower :

ANOTHER STORY OF THE CROSS.



MAN built a summer-house in the middle of his garden — and he planted vine roots at the four corners, and they all died but one.

That same summer the man himself died ; and in the autumn his widow and her son went away on a long journey—and they were gone four years.

The garden was left in charge of a man and a fairy. Yes, it was a fairy, as well as a man, that had the charge, though nobody knew anything about that, for the fairy took her part in the business without any invitation. Fairies are not governed by the laws of fashionable society. When they wish to do a good deed, they do it without waiting for an invitation. And they don't run about to tell all the world of the good they mean to perform, either. They go to work at once to do it.

But the gardener had the idea that he was the sole manager of the place. He was a very good man, but he was ignorant, and knew nothing about fairies. He had a deal of taste, however. He could tell how the flower beds might be laid out with the best effect, and what style of blossoms looked best together; also, he was very neat in his habits, and it was a daring weed that ventured to show its face in any of those garden walks that were under his charge.

There was only one vine root that lived, of the four that the owner of the garden planted at the corners of the summer-house. Great care the man took of this plant — great skill he showed in training it — for he spread the branches about over the frame-work in such a manner, that as it grew it could not help covering the whole of the lattice work.

One night he had gone into the garden — for it was there that he spent his leisure, as well as his working hours. He was standing by the tool house at the end of the longest walk, and

his eyes were fixed upon that famous vine, its dark, rich green leaves, and beautiful red flowers.

“Wonderful!” he exclaimed in his delight — “never did a vine grow like that! But it’s all owing to the care it has had. If I’m a living man, I’ve done my duty by that vine.”

“Yes,” said a voice,—it was the voice of the fairy that was standing beside him,—“that’s the truth; but don’t you think it could be improved?”

“The vine?” exclaimed the gardener, as if he were amazed that any one should imagine it could be improved.

“Yes, the vine—it’s appearance, I mean.”

“I don’t understand,” said the gardener, coldly, in a tone of great displeasure.

“Let me explain, if you don’t understand,” said the fairy, half laughing; for she thought it very stupid in the gardener to get into a huff the moment any one ventured to suggest an improvement. “That round shape is too old-fashioned.”

“Old-fashioned! old-fashioned!” he said sharply. “Well, I hope it’s none the worse for that!”

“None the worse—but none the better—and not so pretty as it might be, Mr. Gardener. Now, I leave it to your own good sense, and excellent taste,—don’t you think the summer house would be greatly improved, if its shape were slightly altered?”

She spoke very respectfully, and the man could not help asking, “How could it be altered?”

“You can make some little ornament of wood, you know, and then train the vine around it. Just try it and see, and if *you* don’t like it, why nobody would be so foolish as to dispute your taste, Mr. Gardener.”

“But what sort of an ornament?” asked the gardener, somewhat softened, and in a fair way of being convinced by the fairy’s delicate compliments.

“What is the name of the vine?” asked she, as if she really did not remember. But this only proved that the fairy had all her wits about

her, because she knew that when Mr. Gardener spoke the name, he would of himself, without any further assistance, think of the ornament that would be most fit and proper.

“Trumpet flower,” he answered.

And the fairy said, “Well,” as if she fully expected him to go on. But the gardener, instead of making any further remark, walked off toward the summer house, and there he sat down to think of what the fairy had said. For he was not so quick-witted as some other people. And he did not get through with his thinking on the subject that day — no, nor the next day, nor the next.

But the week after — you see it all happened at last just as the fairy believed it would — the week after, if you had walked past that garden, you would have seen a cross perched on the middle of the roof of the summer house. It was, indeed, a great improvement. So the gardener thought after it was all done, and he had looked at his work from every point of the garden.

“That fairy’s acquaintance must be worth cultivating,” he said ; and he thought that when he was again at leisure, he would have a long conversation with her on the art of gardening. It was such a capital idea she had suggested — that of training the trumpet flower vine around a cross ! Can you guess why ?

The very night after the cross was fixed in its place on the summer house, the widow and her son returned from their travels. No one expected them — no one, therefore, of all the workmen employed about the place, was so well prepared to render in an account of their stewardship, as the old gardener. Him, and his enjoyment of the surprise, it was really delightful to see. But the rest of the people were in a sad predicament.

If you had looked in upon the returned travelers an hour after their arrival, you would have found the widow in her chamber, on her knees, weeping — weeping for joy and thankfulness that they were returned in safety at last. But

nowhere in all the house could you have found the son.

Where was he?—in the beautiful garden.

Why was he there? What tempted him?
The moonlight.

And nothing but the moonlight? Yes; the fairy had a hand in it—a voice in it, I mean.

Well, and what else? He saw the cross.

Well? He heard the fairy.

And what beside? She taught him a more important lesson than he had learned in all his wanderings.

What lesson? That the cross is more to be desired than the crown—that it is a blessing, not a burden. For, this was just what she said to him.

He had thrown himself full length upon the bench within the arbor—twice he had done that already, and twice had he risen, that he might see if in reality it was a cross that the gardener had placed upon the top of the summer house. Now the third time that he lay down, the fairy came to him.

“So you are back again,” she said, speaking to him as if he were an old, familiar friend. He was not surprised to hear her — you would have thought it was exactly what he expected — that she should come and speak to him in that way.

“Yes,” he replied — “home again at last.”

“Are you glad?” asked she.

“Glad, and not glad.”

“Why glad?”

“I’m tired of travel.”

“And why not?”

“I don’t know what to do with myself next.”

“Are you tired of sight-seeing?”

“Yes — but why do you ask?”

“I might show you a sight.”

“Pray show it;” “if you please,” he added — and that was an unusual addition for him to make, he was not in the habit of entreating but of commanding; though so young a lad, he was willful, and bent on having his own way in all things.

“Behold, then.”

And the boy beheld.

“It is a battle-field,” he said, and his eye flashed — “there will be a splendid fight.”

“What then?”

“This is very strange,” said this boy; evidently he could not understand it. “They carry no swords — the drums do not beat — they have no trumpets — *is* it a battle-field?”

“Yes — but what is it that you see?”

‘Children, and old men, and young men, and women — all is confusion.’

“It is the world,” said the fairy.

“And what is that altar?”

“It is an altar.”

“Yes — but what may it mean?”

“The soldiers make their offerings there before they enlist in the great army.”

“What army?” asked the boy

“Do you not perceive? — the army of the cross.”

“Ah! yes; they sacrifice at the altar, and then receive their badge.”

“That is true. Observe now, there is an offering to be made.”

“Yes,” said the boy, almost breathless with wonder.

“And you can understand it?” asked the fairy.

“Yes,” he answered, in a softened tone.

“And the children also sacrifice?” he said presently, wondering more and more.

“They also sacrifice,” repeated she — “and observe, it is a light cross that is given *them* to bear. See how courageous, yet how meek they are.”

“But,” said the boy, speaking very rapidly, “the gifts are not always left upon the altar! Some of the soldiers, as you call them, carry them away again.”

“Ah,” said the fairy, “but they take the cross also with them, do they not?”

“Yes, it is even so,” he answered, astonished. “There is an artist! and he carries his paints, and canvas, and brushes, away with him; and another who takes his harp, and—and a multitude, who all carry with them what they brought.”

“Yet all these bear a cross, also, from the altar?” asked the fairy again

“Yes, all.”

“Which shows that their gift is sanctified. Now look at those who will not come up with an offering—to the multitude that bear no cross.”

The boy looked. “There are none such,” he said presently.

“Indeed,” the fairy exclaimed, as if she could hardly believe that.

“They have a heavier burden to bear,” he sighed, at length, after he had looked, and thought about it for a long time.

“Tell me the name of that burden.”

“It is their SIN?”

“Yes! It is their darling sin. Harken!”

He listened, and he heard a voice sweeter than an angel’s, crying, “Take my yoke upon you and my burden, for it is light! Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!” And the voice seemed

to come from the high cross before which stood the altar, where the sacrifices were made.

And the boy looked to see if there were any that refused to obey that wondrous call, and afar, in the midst of a restless, struggling crowd, he saw a face and a figure that he had often seen before. He knew it better, more thoroughly than any face and figure in the world. And in his heart he trembled and wept, for the face was turned away from the altar, and the figure did not bear that emblem which the soldiers of the cross bore. He saw all this, and he groaned aloud—but the fairy now was silent. So he watched and waited; oh, in what fear and trembling, until at last, oh joy! the figure turned,—it moved away from the noisy crowd,—it ran—it ran as if death were pursuing it,—and behold! it bowed before the altar and the cross, and the sacrifice that he laid upon the altar was consumed,—the fire from heaven fell and devoured it.

And if the fairy were by his side when the

boy arose and went in to his mother, I know not. But if she were, then she also must have heard him when he told her that henceforth he also was a Soldier of the Cross. That he had sacrificed upon the altar of repentance, and faith, his cherished, his darling Sin.

So you see how it was that the gardener was the means of accomplishing a great and a good thing, when he placed the ornament in the shape of the cross on the summit of the summer-house. A loud voice speaking through a trumpet could not have been heard more distinctly than that blessed voice the young lad heard resounding through his soul.

Reader, is there anywhere in the garden of your heart, room for an arbor, and a vine, and a symbol, like this I have told about? Oh! if there be, and you sometimes hear a Voice speaking to you, be sure you pay good heed to it; and so may God love you!

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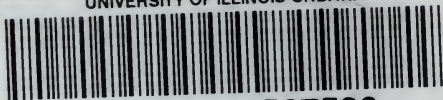
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